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EXTERNAL RELIGION.

ROEHAMPTON:

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EXTERNAL RELIGION:

Its Use and Abuse.

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL, S.J.

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PREFACE.

THE proverbial fruitlessness of religious or philosophical controversy is doubtless in some measure due to the fact that, each one's seemingly many thoughts on such matters are indeed but one thought in diverse clothings; that the conclusions to which we cleave, really so modify our understanding of the principles from which we profess to draw them, that even the few premisses we may seem to hold in union with our opponents are held in a different sense, and thus there is no common basis for argument. It might be thought that, agreeing in the Apostles' Creed and all it involves, a Catholic and Protestant could easily advance to still fuller agreement; but it may well be doubted if their

inner understanding of a single article is exactly the same ; while we venture to suspect that the little differences in each case would be found ultimately to depend upon, rather than support the great conclusions concerning which they are at issue. Whether theoretically it must be so, matters little, since practically, so it is that, for the most part, men first fix their beliefs, and then fabricate reasons in support of them. We flatter ourselves that our thoughts are built up logically from principles which are independent of their consequences ; but in reality, they are rather as the stones of an arch of which each is supported by all the rest. In purely abstract science, where perfect precision of terms is attainable, logic holds inexorable sway ; nor is there room for difference of opinion ; but where the conceptions dealt with are necessarily imperfectly defined, recourse to dialectical reasoning is idle, until agreement in the manner of simple apprehension can be secured.

Here, however, the same difficulty besets the

elements of the discussion as attends on the total construction to which it is directed. There is no rule for forcing another to apprehend things exactly as we ourselves apprehend them, whether they be simpler notions, or their more complex resultants; the only resource is, by every artifice of exposition and illustration, to set out our idea so clearly that it may find its way readily into any mind already capable of responding to it. But as the same bias of vision, or refraction, which distorts the image of the whole, will proportionally distort the image of each component part, one may just as well begin with the former, and face the problem in the gross as in detail. Nay, better; for it is our mode of conceiving the whole that determines our mode of conceiving the parts, rather than inversely.

It is then by the frequent and diversified setting forth of the Catholic conception of Christianity in its entirety, viewed now from one side, now from another, that we best render

assistance to those many souls who, consciously or unconsciously, are in need of such an ideal and to whom it has only to be clearly presented in order to be apprehended, desired, and accepted.

These lectures, slight as they are in many ways and directed to practice rather than to speculation, do nevertheless sketch, in a few rough strokes, one particular outline of the Catholic Religion, which may be of interest just now when the question of ecclesiasticism has come into prominence once more before the eyes of the British public—a question whose solution largely depends on the view we take of the relation of external to internal religion. The Catholic and the Protestant conception of Christianity are distinct from one another not only in their entirety, but—such is the organic unity of each system—in their every detail, notwithstanding many all-but coincidences and points of all-but contact. Were these contacts and coincidences perfect, logic might force the

opponents to total concord under pain of incoherence. But, since as a fact they are not, we shall better deal at once with the two conceptions in their entirety, than wrangle about any of their parts, since these are really shaped and animated by the same spirit that characterizes the whole. In either case our task is one, not of argument, but of exposition; we have but to let the Truth appear, and then bid men "Come and see!" And of these, some will remain and some will go away, according to the power of seeing they bring with them.

G. T.

CONTENTS.

			page
LECTURE	I.	The Incarnation a Redemption of the internal through the external . .	1
LECTURE	II.	The religion of the Incarnation, external and internal . . .	19
LECTURE	III.	Insufficiency of merely internal religion	39
LECTURE	IV.	Insufficiency of merely external religion	58
LECTURE	V.	Abuse of external means of grace .	80
LECTURE	VI.	Abuse of external means of light .	100
LECTURE	VII.	Abuse of the promise of indefectibility	122
LECTURE	VIII.	Interior Faith	142

LECTURE I.

THE INCARNATION A REDEMPTION OF THE INTERNAL THROUGH THE EXTERNAL.

IT has been thought advisable, as far as practically possible, to preserve some kind of rough sequence in these courses of instruction;[1] and therefore as my Right Reverend predecessor has dealt with the Incarnation, it has been suggested that I should deal with what is sometimes called the "Extension of the Incarnation" in the Church and in the individual. To explain in general what we mean by this conception, will perhaps best serve as a programme, or an argument of what is to follow.

A work so many-sided as that of the Incarnation, looking to so many different ends that it is impossible for us to say which is principal in the Divine mind, branches out and extends itself in countless directions; so that if we are

[1] These were instructions given to the Catholic undergraduates at Oxford on the Sundays in Lent Term, 1899.

not to be lost in labyrinths of perplexity, we must fix on some one of these many divergent lines of its development, and content ourselves with seeing how this or that particular feature of the Incarnation reproduces itself in the Church and in the individual.

Plainly this can be seen only by a process of comparison; by looking first upon one picture and then upon the other, on the original and the reproduction, on Christ and on the Church.

It will be necessary for us, therefore, to look again upon the mystery of the Incarnation, not indeed in its many-sided entirety, but with a view to fixing our attention upon that particular feature of it which it is our purpose to consider as repeated in the Church.

Whether, as St. Bonaventure and many others have thought, in the event of man's perseverance in original justice, the Son of God would have become incarnate, not as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but in a glorified impassible humanity—whether He would have assumed the headship of mankind, wedding our unfallen race into the family of the three Divine Persons, and by this alliance lifting it above that of the angels—all this is matter of a more or less probable and even profitable conjecture, but in no sense, of revealed truth. "Christ

Jesus came into this world to save sinners," says St. Paul ; but whether He would have come had there been no sinners to save, we are not told. One thing is, however, fairly clear, that if we regard the shining forth, and revelation of God's goodness and wisdom and love, as the dominating end of all His works in our regard, a far fuller revelation of these attributes has been rendered possible by the permission of sin than would have been otherwise possible. Wonderful as were the gifts of grace bestowed upon man in Paradise, surpassing all that God has done for him in the natural dignity of his spiritual being, yet far more wonderful is grace restored to man who had forfeited it by sin,—the kiss of peace, the costly robe and ring, the banquet of welcome prepared for the returning spendthrift and rebel. *O certe necessarium Adæ peccatum,* sings the Church in her Easter jubilee—"O truly needful sin of Adam"—needful and necessary on the supposition that God's love was to speak itself more fully and superabundantly, not merely in giving but in pardoning, not only in liberality but in mercy and meekness, grace superabounding where sin had abounded. Had God been made man in a world unfallen, we had known Him indeed, fair and glorious among the sons of men, bright with the radiance of Tabor, with

the splendour of His risen and ascended Body, with a glory appealing to the tastes of our spiritual childhood and imperfection; but our finer and more mature perception of a greater glory than all this would never have been awakened, the glory of the Divine Lover emptied of His glory — suffering, afflicted, humbled, slain; the glory which shone upon the pallid face of the dead Christ.

It was, therefore, by preference into a sinful world that the Lamb of God chose to come,— not into pleasant pastures beside the still waters, but into the valley of the shadow of death, into the midst of wolves, to be torn to pieces by sin; to absorb into Himself the venom of our malice against Him, which else had reacted upon ourselves and poisoned us. For when man struck against God by sin, he was as a bird in the tempest that flings itself against the face of a cliff, and had been dashed to pieces had not God in His pity become soft and yielding, and taken to Himself a suffering nature, that the hurt of the shock might be His and not ours.

Healing, restoration, redemption, atonement, such is the purpose and end of the Incarnation most emphasized in Divine revelation. *Propter nos homines*, says the Creed, *et propter nostram*

salutem—words which indeed admit of a wider sense, but whose simpler meaning is doubtless the one intended. Humanity had fallen among thieves and lay by the wayside robbed, stript, wounded, and half-dead; and God, the Good Samaritan, the physician and healer of human nature, drew nigh binding up our wounds, pouring in wine and oil, walking on foot that we might ride at our ease; taking us to the shelter and hospitality of His Church, there to be cared for and ministered to, till His return.

We are then considering our Incarnate Lord as the healer of our wounded nature, in order that we may see how the Church carries on this same work of healing, and by what are substantially the same methods, taking care of redeemed humanity entrusted to her keeping by that Good Samaritan.

And for this end we must notice more closely the nature of our wounds, and the kind of treatment by which our Lord has salved them.

Apart from supernatural assistance, man, as compared with the angels, is by nature a weakly and vulnerable creature, being composed of two unlikely and in some sense antithetical elements —spirit and matter, soul and body. In virtue of his body he belongs to the order of things

visible, tangible, measurable in reference to time and place; subject to succession, change, corruption, and death. In virtue of his soul, he is a spirit, lower indeed than the angels, but like them belonging to that invisible, intangible world outside time and space, which we can in no way imagine, and of which we can speak and think only in symbols and metaphors, drawn from things that appeal to our senses. In man these two worlds are mingled and wedded together; he is, so to say, the child of their marriage; owning an earthly and a Heavenly Father;—as it might be, a tree rooted indeed in the invisible but leaning over and dipping its branches into the passing stream of things visible. And these two elements in man are so adjusted that the lower shall minister to and be subject to the higher; the earthly, the relative, the temporal, to the heavenly, the absolute, the eternal; the senses and imagination feeding the mind, embodying and expressing its thought; the passions and animal feelings mingling with, aiding, and seconding the spiritual will, giving body and expression to its movements.

Yet the lower principle being blind and headstrong is of itself incapable of intelligent sympathy with the higher, and needs to be guided and governed by it; and therefore the free self-

induced perfection of man lies in a certain delicate and easily-disturbed balance, between the visible and the invisible principles of his being; between the flesh and the spirit. *Spiritus quidem promptus est, caro autem infirma* —"The spirit indeed is ready, but the flesh is infirm." The flesh is the weak, the corruptible, the vulnerable element of our composition, in virtue of which our equilibrium is at the best fearfully unstable. Speaking in the gross all the sins which men commit—sins of the mind as well as sins of the body—are, if not directly, at least indirectly traceable to the infirmity of the flesh —to the fact that, our spirit is, through its dependence upon the body and the senses, tied down to the world of feelings and illusions and appearances.

So much is this the case, that in Holy Scripture the "flesh" is more commonly used to denote all that is corrupt and sinful within us, whereas the spirit stands for all that is god-like or divine. Not indeed that one part of our nature is essentially evil—*weak* is not evil—and the other essentially good, as heretics have often taught; for where due equilibrium is preserved, each part in balancing helps the other, and fulfils it. For it is in the embodied spirit, not in the disembodied, that the highest and fullest human

perfection is realized. Man is not an angel prisoned in a body; but through his body supplements in some little way the poverty and imperfection of a spiritual nature of a lower grade than that of the angels. Yet because all human sin is traceable to culpable ignorance or to passion, *i.e.*, to some illusion of the senses or imagination, some uncontrolled outbreak of ungoverned heat, some failure of faith or even of intelligence as to the reality of things invisible and the unreality of things visible —for this reason the flesh which through our senses links us with the visible world, has come to stand for the principle of sin; whereas the spirit which through faith and reason links us with the invisible world, has come to be regarded as the principle of righteousness and divinity.

Left to ourselves, and in the merely natural order of things, the perfect balancing of the spiritual with the fleshly elements of our being, of reason with imagination, of the will with the feelings, is something attained very slowly and with great difficulty; and in the attaining of which our life-task of self-development consists.

But it is a point of common Catholic teaching that God having destined our first parents for a perfection and blessedness altogether above and beyond what was naturally due to them,

started them at that point of perfection which would otherwise have been their goal, and by certain preternatural endowments, gave them what they had not laboured for, namely, all those virtues of mind, heart, affections and passions, by which the flesh and spirit are brought into perfect harmony and concord, that so their energies might be set free and multiplied for conflicts and temptations of an altogether higher order, temptations attendant on altogether superhuman aspirations and attainments; mysterious temptations, such as we can imagine the angels to have been proved by.

There is enough in that dim Oriental record of the Fall, to satisfy us that it was through unbelief in the invisible, through intellectual self-sufficiency, through spiritual pride, that man wilfully and inexcusably subjected himself to the bondage above which he had been supernaturally raised, to the tyranny of things visible—of the flesh, the senses, the imagination, the passions. "Of every tree in the garden shalt thou eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here there is figured some mysterious and at first sight unreasonable restriction of the

indulgence of the natural inclination, a restriction to be submitted to with blind faith in the wisdom and goodness of God. And this restriction was disregarded, seemingly, not through any extreme pressure of carnal appetite, but through a certain revolt of the mind, rebelling against the invisible, impatient to see and understand everything, as though God had no right to keep a secret from man.

Although then the flesh in its healthy state of perfect obedience to the spirit, could not have been the instigating motive of the Fall, could not have responded in any irregular and unmanageable way to temptation from without, yet it was the instrument which man deliberately chose for his own destruction ; and in so doing, he released it from its obedience, and cut the cords by which God had bound the lower appetite into subjection to the higher ; and in freeing the slave, soon found that he had let loose a tyrant : *Servi dominati sunt nostri*— "Our slaves have become our tyrants." Henceforward, he himself became the slave of the visible, the tangible, the illusory, the unreal, of that world, to which he belongs as a creature of space and time, of flesh and blood. Thus it was that the flesh, the instrument of his sin, became the instrument of his chastisement.

Man was robbed and wounded and left half-dead.

It was then for the greater manifestation of God's power and wisdom, that He should not only in His mercy undo the work of sin; but that He should take the very instrument and occasion of evil—the flesh namely, and the visible order of things to which it belongs—and make it an instrument for the remedy of evil.

Hoc opus nostræ salutis
Ordo depoposcerat
Multiformis proditoris
Ars ut artem falleret
Et medelam ferret inde
Hostis unde læserat—

as the Church sings in one of her Passion-tide hymns.

"A certain sense of order and justice," she tells us, "demanded that the work of our restoration should be in such wise, that the craft of the many-sided traitor should be met by God's counter-craft, fetching our cure from the same quarter whence the enemy had brought our hurt," namely, from the flesh, from the visible element of our composition.

It is therefore on this feature of the economy of the Incarnation that we wish to dwell; how Christ has not merely redeemed the whole man,

body as well as soul ; the whole creation, visible as well as invisible ; but how He has used the weaker element for the redemption of the stronger ; saving the spirit through the flesh ; the invisible through the visible ; the internal through the external ; how He has chosen the feeble things of this world to confound the strong ; the foolish to confound the wise ; the ignoble to confound the noble ; the things that relatively are not to confound the things that are—"to confound," that is, to rebuke, to humble, and so to exalt and redeem.

Not without some intentional emphasis does St. John proclaim the mystery as "the Word made *flesh*," rather than "the Word made man ;" glancing, it would seem, at the lower and more humiliating aspect of our nature.

Peccat caro mundat caro
Regnat Deus Dei caro.[1]

But we must also notice that together with man's body and fleshly part, the whole visible bodily world was put out of joint by man's sin ; thrown back, not indeed into primeval chaos and confusion ; but into its state of natural wildness and uncultivation. "Cursed is the

[1] For flesh hath cleansed what flesh had stained
And God's own flesh as God hath reigned.

earth for thy sake, on thy account," says God to the first Adam ; "thorns and briers shall it bring forth." Through Adam's sin, the whole visible order of things was cursed and alienated from God. It had been created to give praise to God through man. Itself soulless and voiceless, it could not know itself or praise God for what He had made it ; but man could see it and know it, and praise God for it ; and so in man it was to have found a voice and given glory to God. The chords were there, tuned by Divine skill, but silent till struck by human hands. But by sin, man lost the art of that music, and his every touch upon that instrument drew out some harsh discord. There was no change in God's work—good and exceeding good as He had pronounced it—the change was all and only in man's heart. "Thorns and briers shall it bring forth." The visible order of things previously submitted by the power of God to man's service, and yielding its fruit in response to light and pleasurable labour, now returned to its natural unruliness, bringing forth thorns and briers, sorrows and snares, and needing to be weeded and laboriously cultivated in the sweat of man's brow, to yield him even in niggardly measure that bread whereby his soul might live. Absolutely speaking, thorns and

briers were there before, yet relatively to man they were not, till he threw himself wilfully in their midst to be entangled and pierced. The change was not in nature, but in man; it was the effect not of things visible, but of man's misuse of things visible. For thorns and briers, sorrows and temptations, are largely little else than a "form" our own mind puts upon things. "It depends on how we take things," as we say. What is sweet in itself is bitter to the disordered palate; and light that gladdens the healthy eye, hurts and tortures that which is weak and unduly sensitive.

And, therefore, since Christ has come with healing in His wings; to breathe into us once more the breath of life; to sanctify and harmonize our flesh and spirit through contact with His own sacred Flesh and Spirit, so far as He has already begun even in this life to change us and bring our flesh once more into obedience to our spirit; in that same measure and degree, He has begun the restoration of the whole visible world to the service of man and the glory of God. It became dumb and blind and deaf, when man was separated from God and enslaved to his own flesh; but now, through the sacred Flesh of Christ, and that of the saints of Christ, it has received vision and voice and

hearing: "He hath done all things well; He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak," the long-silent spheres take up their broken melody once more; the heavens again tell out the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

Yet here again it is in us and through us that the transformation is wrought. The nature of water was not in itself changed when Christ trod the restless waves; nor was that of fire robbed of its natural destructiveness when it singed not a hair of God's saints while it consumed their tormentors; nor were lions less fiercely-natured in the moment when they crouched and licked the feet of the martyrs in the arena; nor did the timid birds of the air belie or alter their natural character when they trustfully gathered around the Saint of Assisi. "What manner of man is this that the winds and the sea obey Him?" A wisely put question! They did not say: What manner of sea and wind is this? It was in Him and not in the elements that they sought the explanation of the marvel. In the measure that man is what he ought to be, that he approaches his lost supernatural dignity as a son of God, the world will be to him what it ought to be, and so it too will be delivered from its bondage and servitude

by being brought under man's feet, even as man finds his liberty at the feet of God. Of this consummation the Prophet says: "Thou hast made him little less than a god, and hast put all things under his feet;" and again: "Sit at My right hand till I make thy foes thy footstool;" till thy enemies have become thy lovers and servants.

To deal with the extension of the Incarnation as we propose, is to show how the Catholic religion carries on the work of man's redemption by the same methods as Christ, turning by some wondrous magic the poison into an antidote, using for our cure those same visible things which we had misused and still misuse to our hurt.

Other defective and false interpretations of our religious instinct seeing all the sin and evil occasioned by the misuse of the senses and the material world, have come to regard the body, the senses, and everything corporeal, as essentially and irredeemably evil, and to seek the liberation and redemption of the spirit through the destruction of the flesh, and by way of a false and impossible asceticism. This error has characterized, not merely the great non-Christian religions of the East, in whose dim twilight so many hundreds of millions have had to grope their way to Heaven as best they might; but

also numberless Christian sects of the Puritan or Catharist type, as well as many schools of pietism just barely tolerated within the Church,—alien to her spirit and guided largely by an unconscious bias of neo-platonism; escaping her censure only through the very confusion of their modes of thought and expression.

But in that interpretation of our religious instinct which God Himself has given us through the Incarnation and in the Catholic religion of Human Nature, the essential and ineffaceable goodness of all God's creatures is the predominant idea. The seeming evilness of the senses and of material things is not in themselves, but in the perverse will of man who misuses them. Let that will be healed and rectified, and at once the visible world returns to its original obedience; and what before were stumbling-blocks, are now steps sloping up to the throne of God. The body, the senses, the imagination, the feelings, the passions, are all, through the redemption of Christ, restored to their original functions as instruments for the sanctification of the soul.

That there should be a visible and hierarchic Church, involving a duty of visible membership as a normal condition of salvation; that she

should use visible rites and sacraments in the sanctification of souls; that the Divine Word should be brought to our souls not by private inspiration, but by the folly and weakness of preaching; that the mysteries of eternity, the dogmas of faith, should be conceived in the forms of human thought, expressed in the language of human speech; that in a thousand ways this Catholic religion should press the visible order into the service of the invisible, redeeming every form of human thought and love and action from the service of sin to the service of God, making the kingdoms of this world,—the kingdoms of art and of science and economics and politics, to be the kingdoms of God and His Christ; bringing music and painting and song and drama into the very Holy of holies itself, all this is but a certain extension of the Incarnation; an expansion of that economy whereby the flesh, *i.e.*, the visible world, which through sin was made opaque and hung as a heavy curtain between us and the invisible, has been made once more transparent and has become the medium of communication between the Heart of God and the heart of man.

Peccat caro mundat caro
Regnat Deus Dei caro.

LECTURE II.

THE RELIGION OF THE INCARNATION, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL.

IT sounds almost irreverent to speak of the religion of the Incarnation as being but one of many actual and possible religions, and it would be false as well as irreverent, did we mean that God were in any sense indifferent as to which of the numerous existing religions a man should adopt. God desires all men, as far as possible, to come to fullest attainable knowledge of Christian and Catholic truth. Still it is always good for us to wake ourselves up to the fact that the state of things, the order of ideas—social, political, religious—to which we have been accustomed from childhood, is not on that account the necessary, the natural, the only conceivable order of things. If we are to have intelligent notions on any such subject, we must try to approach it with a fresh, unused part of our mind, and to get out of the common

groove of speaking and thinking which custom and repetition have hollowed for us. We must try in some measure to rediscover for ourselves what has long since been discovered and communicated to us by others ; for this is to make the truth our own ; to realize it, instead of merely repeating it. In our boyhood the laws of physical nature on the one hand, and on the other, the manners, customs, and institutions of our home and country, seem to us equally necessary and inevitable. Not till we begin to read or to travel, and in other ways to widen the field of our experience, do we come to feel the vast difference between things that *must* be and things that may or may not be. It is the purpose of a liberal education to rid us of this mental "provincialism," to save us from the narrowness of a particular, as opposed to an all-round, universal view of the main interests of life. It should help us to take an outside impersonal survey of ourselves, which so few uneducated persons are really capable of doing ; to compare our ideas, beliefs, habits, and tastes, with those of the most cultivated minds, whether of our own or of other times and countries, and thus measuring, to criticize and correct ourselves.

If, therefore, we are to be educated and intelligent Catholics, it is necessary for us to wake to

the fact that this religion of ours, unique as it is in some ways, is not the only conceivable, nor the only existing religion ; and that other religions—all inadequate, all more or less false—can be, and are accepted, as seriously and as earnestly by millions of mankind. Ignorant people can never realize that a foreigner's language is to him native, and not foreign. Seeing that a horse is a horse, why a Frenchman should persist in calling it *cheval*, is to them always an obscure mystery, an instance of that strange unreasonableness which distinguishes the foreigner from the true-born Briton. In like manner it is some time before the possibility of a religion other than our own, becomes to us a *real* thought. Yet, till it does so, till we can compare and contrast our own religion with other religions that have been, or that might have been, till we can recognize its distinctive characteristics, we can hardly be said to know it intelligently ; for all intelligent knowledge implies discrimination—that is, a sense of difference and opposition.

This premised, let us notice that just as the various sorts of social and political institutions which prevail, and have prevailed, among men of different races and ages, are so many attempts

to satisfy and interpret a certain instinct of civilization, which is universal and native to the human soul; so the various and conflicting religions upon the face of the earth are all attempts to interpret, explain, and satisfy a certain religious instinct or craving, which is now allowed on all hands to be as much a part of our nature as is the faculty of speech or of reason. Man, always and everywhere, feels that there is something in the unseen world he must worship and obey. What that object is, how it is to be worshipped, in what it is to be obeyed—this is not written in his soul; he is left to learn it from others, or find it out for himself. But the feeling, the craving, the spiritual instinct, is there by nature; just as by nature we all suffer bodily hunger, and yet have to learn by costly experience, and through many mistakes, what may be eaten, what must be left; what foods are wholesome or agreeable, what unsavoury or deleterious; matters in which races and peoples differ as much as they do in their religions.

Of course, just as at one end of the scale of civilization we may find savages so degraded as to have lost all wish for civilization, or, at the other end, philosophers like Rousseau, who, disgusted with a corrupt and effete civilization,

have sophisticated their minds and reasoned away their healthy instincts in the matter, so in regard to the religious faculty we may find individuals, or classes, whose better nature has for one reason or another been perverted, and their spiritual instinct paralyzed. But in spite of these exceptions, the fact stands out plain that man is essentially a religious animal, just as he is essentially a reasoning animal, however irreligious or unreasonable he may be in his life and conduct.

Left to themselves, and apart from the supernatural teaching of revelation, men have always striven to frame some relatively satisfactory explanation of this religious craving or tendency ; to form some theory or view of human life, its origin and its end, which will fit in with and explain their sense of duty, their conviction of the infinite opposition between right and wrong, their remorse of conscience, their fear of judgment, their hope of immortality and of a diviner and fuller life. We know what it is to be troubled by some imperious, yet vague and indefinite want, which we try to satisfy first by one thing, then by another, but can never perfectly quiet or allay. So it is with man when he tries to invent a religion for himself ; he obeys an inexorable appetite of his spiritual nature,

hungering for a god and a religion ; but in his understanding and interpretation of that appetite, in the food that he offers it, he is fallible, inadequate, more or less false, yet capable of ever progressing towards something better, just as he is capable of a sort of blundering progress in science, or in the arts of civilization.

For our present purpose then, we mean by a "religion," an interpretation, whether human or divine, natural or revealed, of our inborn religious instinct—an explanation that will account for it, justify it, and give it practical direction and guidance. But just as man's soul fashions to itself a body to complete its otherwise imperfect spiritual nature, so man's thoughts and theories and abstract ideas must always fix and embody themselves in some concrete form, that appeals to the imagination and the senses, in some story or myth, or symbol or picture ; or at least in some "form of words," by which the ideas may be caught, and tied down to earth before they vanish into thin air. And therefore, in all these religions, or interpretations of the religious instinct, whether true or false, Christian or non-Christian, we observe two parts—outward and inward ; body and soul ; visible and invisible ; on the one side beliefs, convictions, theories belonging to the mind ; on the other, facts,

legends, rites, formulæ in which those beliefs are clothed and made visible to the eye of the imagination. A religion, to be human and practicable, must, like man himself, have a body and soul ; all puritanical attempts at a merely philosophical, spiritual religion, discarding outward and imaginative expression, are violently unnatural, and foredoomed to failure.

Untaught by Divine revelation, and left to their own efforts to find out a sort of natural religion for themselves, men might indeed succeed in advancing, however slowly, from very childish to less childish and more worthy conceptions of things Divine, somewhat as they advance in their interpretation of physical nature as a whole. But even this advance would be on the condition of a perfect and laborious fidelity to the light of natural reason, and to the guidance of natural conscience—a condition never realized in any great measure, owing, first, to the persistent illusions of the senses and imagination, and then to the unruliness of the animal affections and passions—in other words, owing to man's bondage to things visible ; to the natural weakness of his faith, of his hold on the invisible.

Just because man's religion must have a body as well as a soul ; an outward expression, as

well as an inward meaning ; therefore, unless it be of Divine origin, and under supernatural protection, it is, by nature, as corruptible, as vulnerable, as man himself. We are all prone to do what is easier and demands least exertion. It is easier to let the body shape and govern the soul, than to subject it to the soul; and similarly, it is easier to let our imagination and our passions govern our beliefs than to bring them into conformity with, and subjection to, our beliefs. It is easier to suppose that things are in themselves as they seem to the eye, or as they sound to the ear, than to discern the vast and momentous difference between appearance and reality. The history of the various man-made religions shows us everywhere that idolatry, superstition, and corruption of the truth, arises from the tendency to forget that the outward and visible embodiment of Divine truth is not its soul and essence ; that it answers indeed, as words do, to the inward sense, yet is as distinct from it as words are from the realities they stand for.

If, then, the endeavour to embody invisible truths in some visible form is so universally a source of corruption ; if all decay originates in the bodily envelope of religion, is not this an argument for a purely spiritual, philosophical

religion—without creed or dogma or ritual or visible hierarchic Church; a religion merely of the heart and mind? This, however, would be to say in other words that because our body is a source of so much sin and trouble to us, it would be better to dispense with the body altogether! An idle supposition, since we are inevitably men and not angels; and our highest life and perfection, however difficult of attainment, must be an embodied perfection consisting of an harmony between the flesh and the spirit. So, too, the ideal religion towards which man, unassisted by revelation, vainly aspires, is one in which the outward and visible expression shall be entirely governed by and obedient to the ever-growing inward truth, not perverting or obscuring it, but suffering it to shine through without distortion, as light through pure crystal. But taking fallen man as he is, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; the outward and inward, the visible and invisible continually at war; this ideal is, apart from revelation, hopelessly unattainable; and in every man-made religion, words almost necessarily tend to usurp the place of truths; images to be substituted for realities; shadows for substances; the letter for the spirit.

Having thus glanced at the ordinary type of all man-made and natural religions, we can better estimate the distinctive superiority of the supernatural God-made religion of the Incarnation.

As grace does not destroy or detract from anything good in nature, but simply elevates and perfects it by way of addition, so the Christian revelation lacks nothing that belongs to our ideal of a perfect religion, but satisfies superabundantly, and beyond all hope, the cravings of our natural religious instinct. It not only gives us *gratis*, without money, without price, without labour, what else, centuries of labour had ill compassed, if at all; it not only starts us at that point of religious enlightenment, which else had been our practically unattainable goal; but it raises the whole level of our progress into an altogether higher plane, and sets before us such a goal as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived.

If, however, ours is a Divine and supernatural religion, it is, for that very reason, of all religions the most supremely human, adapted to all the complex needs of our double nature, bodily and spiritual, by His skill who as He made man, and was made man, so knows, as none other, what is in man.

Now Christ's religion would not have been, what it is so pre-eminently, a *human* religion, had it been content simply with instructing our intelligence in the truths pertaining to the Kingdom of God, without at the same time providing for the worthy expression and embodiment of those truths and clothing them in visible and imaginable forms. It had been of no avail for God to supplement the struggling light of our reason with the noon-day brightness of supernatural revelation, had He at the same time left us to the mercy of our own imagination —that source of all error and spiritual illusion— for the embodiment and concrete setting forth of that truth, in a form accessible to those uncultivated millions for whose redemption He came principally.

> And so the Word had breath and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds,
> In loveliness of perfect deeds
> More strong than all poetic thought;
> Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
> Or builds the house, or digs the grave;
> Or those wild eyes that watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef.

That is to say, the Word-made-flesh clothed His words in flesh; gave His doctrine its perfect complement and correlative—a visible form and

body fitted to it by the same Divine skill that fashioned our body to be the expression, the complement, the instrument of our soul. Else, He had left the weak and vulnerable element of religion, the source of all its decay and corruption, unhealed and unredeemed.

Nor is this divinely-given embodiment of truth a contingent feature of Christian religion, but altogether distinctive and essential. Catholicity is before all else the religion of the Word-made-flesh, *i.e.*, of Divine Truth, naturally invisible, and, in a sense, abstract, but now made visible and concrete; emptied of its glory, swathed as it were in the bands of human words, rites, and symbols; laid in the manger to be the food, the common daily bread of the rudest and simplest. It is the religion which transforms the outward and bodily, from being a source of corruption, to being a source of health and life, using it to resuscitate, to rule, to correct the inward and spiritual; just as noble standards of art awake, educate, and refine the artistic sense latent within us, which else would manifest itself, if at all, in all manner of frivolous vulgarity.

Our Lord, then, not only taught the truth with His lips and clothed it in words of Divine authority, but He lived and acted the truth in

His life, and this not merely in the sense that He fulfilled the Divine will in all His conduct, thus making the highest ideal of sanctity visible in a concrete example; but in the sense that every deed and event of His mortal life was prophetic; was as it were a sacrament or symbol of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; was crowded with inexhaustible meaning touching the things of the eternal and invisible world.

For let us notice that quite apart from the Incarnation, the Eternal Word was and is the true light enlightening every man that cometh into the world. The light of reason and whatever truth reason has attained is from Him. He gave us our natural religious instinct; and whatever light lingers in the corruptest religions of the world, is a spark of that Eternal Light that shines ever in darkness, though the darkness cannot comprehend it.

It was His Divine will that from the very beginning had, under the abstract name of Conscience, been struggling against the selfish and sinful will of every child of Adam; so constantly and persistently, that men mistook that Divine presence within them for part of themselves, for one of their natural springs of action. Here and there the truth dawned upon choicer and purer minds, a Socrates or a Marcus

Aurelius. But the bulk of men were too gross, too self-ignorant, to discern a presence so near them, so subtly intertwined with their own soul; and therefore it was needful that this conscience of theirs, this indwelling Will of God, this Power within making for justice, should go outside them, should become Incarnate and face them, and speak to them, as man to man: that God should live visibly and outwardly upon earth that life of humiliation which He lives millions of times over in human souls; that thus our slow minds might apprehend, at least in figure, that tragedy which is realized daily in the very core of our being.

For there, with the first dawn of reason, the first glimmer of conscience, God comes knocking at the heart's door for admission that the Divine Life may be born in our will. He comes to His own and His own receive Him not; or, if He is received, it is to dwell with us in all the feebleness and dependence of a helpless babe, left at the mercy of our free-will to be driven out at any moment, or to be neglected, starved, slighted; for it rests with our choice whether the spark of Divine fire shall be rudely extinguished, or shall be fostered in our soul.

His whole life within us is a life of poverty,

labour, and sorrow ; of agonizing and struggling for dominion over the heart He has created to be His kingdom. In the resistance we offer to the command of conscience, to this inward impulse of the Divine will, God is continually betrayed, forsaken, denied, condemned, scorned, spat upon, crucified, buried, and forgotten. By taking to Himself a suffering body, God has made visible to our bodily eyes the true nature of sin. He has brought home to our senses what men do, when they fight against goodness and justice and truth and charity and all that is Divine ; against what is in any sense the cause of God ; or against the servants and representatives of God ; how as far as lies in them they are fighting against Him, slaying and crucifying their God. Until God was passible and mortal, sin could do Him no harm, and could hurt none but the sinner ; when He became passible, sin leapt upon Him and rent Him limb from limb as a wolf rends a lamb. The Crucifix is the collective sin of the world made visible. It shows us our sins preying upon God, and God meekly submitting to our violence, lest it should react upon us to our own destruction.

The Resurrection, again, is the outward counterpart of that inward resurrection of Christ in the soul when conscience, quickened from the

dead by grace, reasserts itself once more and reigns victorious in the penitent heart; while Christ, the once feeble Babe of Bethlehem, coming at last in glory to judge the world, speaks to us of the eventual and certain triumph of that Christ within our conscience, of whose present meekness we take such cowardly advantage, but who, we know, will at last be, and even now is, our inexorable Judge—*Nunc est judicium hujus mundi*—already has the Last Judgment begun within us.

Once more, the best and purest men of every generation, those who have lived for the service of goodness, truth, justice, and mercy, as for something greater than themselves; as for an interest claiming the sacrifice of their private interest — something indistinctly felt to be the will of a Divine Power; such men have ever sought and longed for some concrete embodiment of the cause they have lived for, in which it should be personified, loved, and worshipped; they have formed or imagined to themselves a multitude of heroes and deities, and have distributed amongst them all that they knew and loved of the Divine perfection. Now, this natural desire God has at once satisfied and infinitely surpassed in becoming Man, to the end that in Christ, without any

metaphor or fancy, but in literal plain fact, we should possess not only the highest finite example of all that is good and true and fair; of all that is worth living and dying for; but the very source and substance of all such goodness; God Himself, incarnate, personal, human, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh.

Thus we see how the religion of the Incarnation explains and satisfies beyond all measure the religious aspirations of those rare souls who have been perfectly faithful to the nature God has given them; and how at the same time it is calculated to evoke like aspirations in that great multitude of sinful men who cannot apprehend spiritual truths, except as embodied in some visible form. We see how the external and visible Christ, the Word Incarnate, reveals and makes plain to our earthly minds, all, and immeasurably more, that the internal Christ of our conscience, the Light which lightens every man that comes into this world, would teach us, did we not harden our hearts by infidelity to grace. We see how this Christ that is outside us, calls aloud to the stifled and buried Christ that is within us, *Exi foras!* "Come forth!" and how our conscience is resonant to that call and

answers, and comes forth from the sepulchre to a new and supernatural life; and how by this union of the outward and inward rule of Christ—the inward supplemented, corrected, and elevated by the outward—our nature is lifted up to companionship with God.

The importance of being clear in this matter cannot be exaggerated in these days, when Catholics are sometimes so lamentably hazy as to the great principles which separate their unique religion from every other religion, and make it *sui generis* and singular. A contempt for the exterior part of religion, for dogmas, sacraments, rites, hierarchic order, and all the "machinery," as it might be called, of a visible Church, is just now very prevalent, not among the enemies of religion—that would not surprise us—but among those who are obviously religious-minded and sincere. Comparing the religions of the world one with another, and finding some fragmentary truth and goodness in all; and at the same time seeing that all their errors, superstitions, and corruptions are connected with the endeavour to make religion tangible and intelligible to our imperfect minds, it has seemed wiser to these men, to regard all this outward part of religion as but provisional and unimportant—the mere clothes of truth that must be continually altered,

and from time to time discarded altogether as old-fashioned and impossible.

This would undoubtedly be a just view had God left us unaided in our natural state; had He simply given us our religious instinct and left the interpretation of it to ourselves, as He has left to us the interpretation of physical nature. But by the Incarnation, God has taken this work out of our hands; and has by way of revelation, not only interpreted to us clearly all that our religious instinct involves and implies, but has created in us new aspirations and desires by putting before us hopes exceeding all that nature could ever have dreamt of.

Because then the Catholic religion, viewed outwardly as an embodiment of truth, is not a natural and human interpretation of our religious instincts, but supernatural and Divine, we are constrained to regard it, not as provisional and tentative, but as infallible and final. He who has redeemed the body as well as the soul, and has won for it immortality and incorruptibility, beyond its nature, He too has redeemed and transformed the naturally corruptible part of religion, its outward expression and embodiment, and has made it, no longer detrimental, but obedient and serviceable to the inward and spiritual part.

We do not mean that there is no progress in the Church's understanding of the deposit of faith committed to her by Christ ; no development in the structure of the visible Body of Christ. We do not mean that outside that core of divinely authorized religion there may not be among Catholics many religious beliefs, true or false ; many religious practices, healthy or unhealthy, which are simply of human origin, the fruit of our endeavours to interpret for ourselves, in matters where the Church has not spoken ; but we mean that Christ's truth is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and that He is with us all days, even to the end of the world ; that as we adore the Sacred Humanity and, with It, every part of that fleshly Body wherein God became in some sort visible to mortal eyes ; so do we yield a relatively Divine honour to the hierarchic Church upon earth, to every word and letter, sacrament and symbol, chosen by God Himself to embody as much of the Eternal Truth, as our weak eyes can as yet bear to look upon.

LECTURE III.

INSUFFICIENCY OF MERELY INTERNAL RELIGION.

IN our first instruction we fixed on that particular feature of the Incarnation which we proposed to consider as reproduced in the Church and in the individual. We saw how God had chosen to display His wisdom and power more gloriously by taking as the instrument and cause of our redemption what had been the instrument and occasion of our ruin—our body, and the bodily world to which it belongs and with which it connects us. We saw that as our mind was naturally prone to error and illusion through its dependence on the imagination; and our will still more prone to perversion by reason of its alliance with the passions and feelings, so God chose these very sources of weakness and corruption—the body, the senses, and the visible world, to undo the mischief they had occasioned; thus miraculously changing the poison into an anti-

dote, the forbidden fruit of death into the medicine of immortality. Our second Conference brought us to a more particular application of this method of redemption. We saw that every human religion—by which we meant an interpretation of our inborn religious instincts and appetites—in order to be practicable and congenial to our nature, must have its body as well as its soul; its outward and visible expression, in words, dogmas, rites, and organization; as well as its inward sense. We went on to notice that in all man-made, unrevealed religions, this bodily part was naturally the corruptible element, the source of decay and death; and that therefore, consistently with the above principle of using the weak to confound the strong, our Saviour had not only revealed to us a Divine and infallible interpretation of our spiritual cravings, but had done so through the medium of human words and deeds and actions that addressed themselves to our senses. He might have worked from within, putting the truth directly into our souls by internal inspiration; and leaving it to us to clothe it in imagery, or to work it out into visible deeds as best we might. But He preferred, what might seem to us the meaner method, of coming in from outside through the lowly door of our eyes and ears

and other senses. Henceforth external religion was not to be merely our very imperfect self-devised utterance of a religion already planted by God within our soul; but it was to be the divinely formed channel through which a supernatural religion was to get into the soul—was to pass from the mind and heart of God into the mind and heart of man. At all times the Word of God was by nature in the very centre of every human soul, ready to teach it a certain measure of Divine truth, would it but listen; but as men, engrossed in the things of sense, would not listen, the Word went outside them and took flesh and spoke to them through their senses, as it were, to force them to listen. Thus the religion of the Incarnation is before all else an external religion, approaching the soul from without, just as Christ when on earth spoke to men face to face from without. The Eternal Light which was incarnate in Him and shone in Him, was from Him communicated to us, as from an outside source of illumination.

We have already hinted at a rough illustration of our point to be drawn from the æsthetic order. Most men have some dormant musical capacity in their souls, to be wakened sometimes designedly, sometimes by accident, sometimes never at all. Left to himself, each one in his

endeavour to satisfy the sense of music of which he has become conscious, might evolve some sort of rude, uncouth melody of his own; but for the most part our musical faculty is wakened in us, formed, and educated by the influence, good or evil, of those among whom we dwell, whereas the viciousness of public taste in this matter keeps us back and perverts and hinders our progress. We know the advantage, in this as in other matters, of a correct and classical standard; how it hastens, guides, and amplifies the growth of the sense of music within us; how it enables us gradually to appropriate to ourselves the accumulated experience and judgment of the best critics in the art, who have gone before us. We see also how this external standard of music—the possession of the public at large and of no individual in particular—is not formed by our own private taste, but rather forms it; how it is something outside us and not our own; yet which we strive to bring inside us and to make our own; for there is in us something that corresponds to it and can be shaped by it to its likeness. So our religious sense, our capacity for a certain Divine music, and harmony with God in thought and affection, might long lie dormant, or would at best exhibit a wild and straggling growth, were it left solely

to our own cultivation; were there not also, outside us, a divinely revealed standard in Christ, to wake up and gradually bring to perfection the latent Christ that is within us. There are infinite differences of genius, but the greatest genius will do little or nothing in isolation unaided by teaching and by examples of excellence already attained; and there are infinite differences of religious inspiration—a sort of genius for things Divine—yet the most abundant will be cramped and largely wasted for lack of an external religion; for want of a Christ and a Catholic Church.

Needless to say, the external guide and standard is of no avail if there be not the internal capacity to develop. We cannot educate or draw out of ourselves what is not in us. But every man who has reason and conscience and liberty and the measure of grace accorded to all, has it in him to know and love God.

Still the possession of both the capacity and the standard is profitless unless we use the latter to develop the former. For this development of interior religion is the whole end and purpose of that which is exterior. How does it better us to be forced to sit and listen to good music if it wake no echo of sympathy and

appreciation in our soul; if it do not in some degree educate and improve our taste? There are, we know, earless, tuneless people who would pose as musical simply because they make it a point to be bodily present wherever the best music is to be had, though it penetrates them as little as the rain that patters on a rock. And there are Catholic Christians who are satisfied with the knowledge that in the Church they have ready at hand a divinely revealed standard of spiritual truth, and who imagine that Christianity consists in the profession and acknowledgment of this fact; forgetting that the Christ and the Religion that is outside them is but a means to wake up and develop the Christ and the Religion that is latent within them. If we hold a light to the end of a taper, it is only in order that the flame may be communicated to the taper and make it in some sense an independent source of light. Were the taper damp or otherwise incombustible, we might go on for ever holding the light there. The applied flame would seem to be, but would not be its own. External religion, such as we have in Christ and the Catholic Church, applies the flame of truth and love to our soul. Perhaps by way of laborious friction we might have been able to produce some little spark of Divine life in our-

selves, aided by those graces which God scatters outside the Church to all men; but by supernatural revelation God puts a blazing brand into our hands to hasten and facilitate matters, for He wants a big conflagration and that speedily. *Ignem veni mittere in terram*, He says, *et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?*

This brings us to the consideration of a truth that lies midway between two false extremes, and concerns the more exact relation of this exterior religion to our personal and interior religion.

The revolt against the Catholic Church which broke out in the sixteenth century tended in the direction of a complete denial of all need of an outward objective religion with fixed dogmatic teaching, with forms of worship and sacramental means of grace. It favoured the opinion that Christ's teaching was perpetuated by the Holy Ghost speaking, not to the visible Church collectively, and through the visible Church to the individual, but indirectly and independently to each several soul. This is the principle of private inspiration, private judgment —a sort of false mysticism—which though slightly modified is not substantially changed by inconsistently acknowledging the Bible as an external standard of religious truth. It is the denial

of any outward religious authority upon earth to which obedience is due; and the assertion of an excessive liberty and self-sufficiency on the part of the individual. For although it recognizes a sort of divinely provided guidance in the Sacred Scriptures and in the religious traditions and practices of Christians, yet it is not the guidance of a will, a personality, distinct from our own, which commands with authority; it is not the guidance of an external Christ, our Master and Lord; but only such as we find in books, or examples, or in the advice of others by which we freely choose to *guide ourselves*—the responsibility being all ours. The doctrine may be there for us to find if we choose and are able; but there is no living teacher upon earth whose duty it is to bring it to us; whose right it is to impose it upon us.

Contrary to this denial of external religious authority, and as it were at the other extreme, is that formalism or externality which comes of forgetting that the outward exists solely for the sake of the inward; that Christ has gone outside us and become incarnate, only that He may live within us more fully and wonderfully than had been possible had we known Him only in the voice of conscience, and not also in the words of His human speech.

Our Christian religion, as we said, is pre-eminently and essentially an incarnation, an embodying of Divine Truth; but this visible Church, this Kingdom of God on earth, is for the sake of the invisible Church, that is, for the sake of His kingship and dominion in each particular soul. This formalism is not the error of any definite sect or party, but a tendency on the part of certain minds to misunderstand the stress rightly laid by the Catholic Church in these modern days of lawless individualism, on the great principles of authority and obedience and Church-membership. It shows itself in the tendency to pervert what God has designed to be supernatural helps, into occasions of hindrance; to use the light and guidance He has given us, not, as He intended, to stimulate and exalt our intelligence and to carry it far above and beyond what it otherwise could have accomplished; but as an occasion of mental lethargy and sluggishness; to use the sacraments and means of grace, not as fountains of new energy, making possible and obligatory greater exertion than we had else been capable of, but as short cuts to an easy level of virtue which might well have been attainable without them; to make them substitutes for trouble and exertion and watchfulness, and the other

abundant natural means already at our disposal. This is of course to hide the candle of revelation under a bushel, instead of using it to light up every dark corner of our mind; it is to bury the talent of sacramental grace in cold earth, instead of trading with it industriously and using it to extend the field of our spiritual activity.

An external religion so abused becomes to many an occasion of ruin instead of a cause of resurrection, it stunts and paralyzes instead of expanding and quickening their will and intelligence.

They might in some cases be better without it. Alms does an idle man harm, if want would have forced him to work. We sometimes find that those who have no external religion or church to help them, feeling that they are thrown entirely upon their own resources, exert themselves more strenuously than we do, and make use of every atom of the little they have,—of the light of reason and conscience, of the fragments of Catholic truth that still linger with them, of the uncovenanted graces which God offers to all earnest souls. And thus they really produce more fruit than many a carefully cultivated tree that cumbers the ground in the luxuriant vineyard of the Catholic Church;—

they show more intelligent interest in the fraction of truth which they possess ; they have more spontaneous sympathy with what they hold to be the law and will of God.

By the "formalist," we do not mean only, or chiefly, the Catholic in name, who makes no attempt to practise the external duties of a Catholic; whose connection with the visible Church is merely nominal ; but him rather who lazily puts his whole trust in these external conformities, as though they were an end in themselves, the essence of the Christian life, and not merely its condition ; who forgets that our Catholic religion is principally, though not exclusively, interior, and does not *consist* in professions and observances, although it does not exist without them. We mean the Catholic who is satisfied to swear by all the Church teaches, without caring to know in detail what she does teach, or to feed his mind and intelligence upon her doctrine, and to advance in his understanding of it ; and who makes the frequentation of the sacraments, and other observances of piety, a substitute for that struggle and conflict for which they are precisely designed to strengthen us.

To have defined these erroneous extremes is to have already roughly indicated the golden

mean of Catholic truth, which teaches on the one hand that submission to the external religion of Christ and His visible Church is, in normal cases, the indispensable condition of that fulness of interior religion to which Christians alone are enabled to aspire; and, on the other, that this external religion, destined to be a rock of security, may become a rock of offence, if, instead of being used for the expansion and elevation of our religious faculty, it is misused as a pretext for its neglect.

We shall devote the rest of this instruction to briefly emphasizing the former point, leaving the latter for future occasions.

In the light of all that we have seen as to the purpose and meaning of the Incarnation, the wonder is how any one with even a mediocre comprehension of that mystery could regard the visible Church and her institutions as merely a convenience to be left or used at will, or otherwise than as the divinely appointed instrument of eternal life, without which there is no salvation for those who wilfully refuse to make use of it. "I am the Way," says Christ, "no man cometh to the Father but by Me." The Manhood of Christ, the human words of Christ, the human actions of Christ,—by these means the grossness, the unspirituality of our fallen nature

was to be counteracted ; God was to stoop to our lowness, bend with our frailty, that He might raise us and strengthen us. During the days of His brief sojourn upon earth, the methods of His ministry were clearly defined. His mission was not to the few, but to the many ; not to the subtle-minded and learned, but to the plain-minded and ignorant ; not to the scrupulously conscientious and faultless, but to publicans and sinners : " I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance." Again, He came to teach this mob, representative in small of the uncultivated millions of humanity, not truisms, nor moral platitudes, nor plain facts of easy observation, but mystical, spiritual truths ; and these, not merely such as a few pure and thoughtful minds here and there might have dimly conjectured for themselves after a process of delicate self-analysis, but mysteries of an entirely supernatural order, of which there is to be found no hint or suspicion in the natural aspirations of even the noblest and most immaculate soul.

This being so, He necessarily taught with authority, or dogmatically, not as the scribes and doctors, tentatively, arguing, appealing, persuading ; not even as Socrates did, trying to make men conscious of the deity within them

by questioning them, and making them explicitly aware of what they unconsciously knew already. "I am the Truth, I am the Light of the world; hear not Moses or Elias, but hear Me. He that believeth not shall be condemned." No other method was conceivably possible if the Words of Eternal Life were to be made the common possession of the millions that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. For that end it was indispensable that those Words should be made Flesh and dwell among us familiarly. St. Paul tells us that it was because the method of private judgment had denied God, that God cast it aside in favour of the folly of preaching, *i.e.*, in favour of the dogmatic method—not proving the truth, but asserting it on authority.

Private judgment is not something intrinsically wrong or ridiculous, except on the supposition that public and authorized judgment has made the labour unnecessary. Contrariwise, to find the truth for ourselves is a method more becoming our dignity as free, self-forming agents, than to be taught it as children who repeat what they are told, and because they are told. Yet God chose the lowlier method, as better accommodated to the needs of the multitudes, discarding the method more agreeable to the pride of human wisdom.

Naturally it should have been the duty and office of the wise and the learned to keep alive the knowledge of God in the world, so far as it could have been attained without revelation; and to break the bread of truth to the unlettered crowds who had neither time nor talent to learn for themselves, but were necessarily dependent on the tradition and teaching of their leaders. But as the wise of this world abused their trust, and held back the truth from the people, because they themselves loved better the ways of darkness, therefore God cast them off, and Himself became the Teacher of the millions; He sent a handful of fishermen to preach to the whole world truths transcending all that Plato had ever dreamt of.

Nor did He make special provision that the cultured and philosophical minority might enter the Kingdom of Truth by some more seemly and less barbarous route than that followed by the common herd. Only those who were willing to join the crowd, to receive the Kingdom as little children, to listen with faith to the teaching of external authority, could enter in at all.

There is no doubt then, that Christ's own method of enlightening souls during His earthly ministry, was the dogmatic method, not the method of private judgment. He did not say:

Look into yourselves; but: Listen to Me; He did not say: Examine My reasons and accept My doctrine as far as you understand it; but: Believe My doctrine whether you understand it or not. In other words, He was in Himself what His Church claims to be now, an external rule of truth by which the mind might test itself and with which it should strive to conform itself. Furthermore, He was a Divine and infallible rule. We spoke of the need of certain outside standards of good art, say, of good music. But at the best these standards are tentative and variable; and disputes as to their absolute and final value are infinite. When we have corrected ourselves by them we know that we are at least fashionable, or conventionally right; but whether we are absolutely right, who can decide? Perhaps another generation may hold us for Philistines. But Christ was not among religious teachers what Homer was among poets, or Aristotle among philosophers, a great name, a great classic, nor even the greatest; He was the absolute Truth Incarnate, a standard of unquestionable and final value.

Are we then to suppose, that when He was withdrawn from earth He left no provision for the continuance of the same method; that this infallible external standard of truth ascended

with Him into Heaven; or was carelessly left on earth so ill-guarded that now men scarce know where to look for it; and must listen to the claims of any fanatic who cries out: Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, there!

"As the Father hath sent Me," He says to His Church, "so send I you." "I am the light of the world." "You are the light of the world." "He that heareth you heareth Me." These and many other like sayings get their best interpretation from the fact that there always has been since Christ's Ascension, an united hierarchic Church claiming to inherit these promises and to possess and apply that standard of truth which Christ left in her hands.

Through this visible Church we have still contact with Christ in so much as her official acts are His. It is His hand reaching out across the centuries, which baptizes and consecrates and blesses and sacrifices. It is His words spoken two thousand years ago and echoed from one generation to the next, which the Church of to-day still treasures and ponders in her heart. She is, therefore, the extension, the stretching out of Christ all over the earth and all through the ages, even to the consummation of the world. And what we have said of the Church considered as an external source of

light for the mind—a standard of religious truth; holds of her equally when viewed as an external source of grace. For as by her teaching she gives us light beyond all that the best and wisest had ever attained unassisted, so by her sacraments rightly received and rightly followed up, she gives energy to our will and warmth to our good desires beyond all that we could naturally have drawn forth from ourselves.

Finally, let us notice that the organized unity of the hierarchic visible Church is itself in some way the sacrament, the outward and effectual sign of that invisible union in Christ of all souls in Heaven and on earth, in whom the love of Divine goodness holds the first place. For they being many, are by charity one with each other and with God; and have but one mind and heart and life. To be thus in the communion of saints is to be in the state of grace or salvation. Of this mysterious unity the outward unity of the visible Church is at once the symbol and the effectual instrument. To be organically incorporated with the visible Church as its member, is, for those whom ignorance or impossibility does not excuse, a *sine qua non* of incorporation into the communion of saints. For such, "Outside the Church, there is, no salvation." But is there necessarily salvation

for them inside? It is as with other sacraments. Baptism is of no avail without the due dispositions; and yet without Baptism there is no salvation for those to whom that sacrament is accessible. Similarly, for us who know, membership, outward, real, active, and not merely nominal membership, with the visible external Church is an essential condition for salvation; although it is not enough, not the only condition. Those who have never seen or heard Christ in Himself or in His Church, may in God's mercy, be waked some other way to the recognition of the Christ that lives in the conscience of every man who comes into this world; but for us, that wakening is provided for in the human voice of Christ incarnate, who called Lazarus from the grave; the voice which we still hear in the Catholic Church; of which He says: "He that heareth you heareth Me," and again: "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me."

LECTURE IV.

INSUFFICIENCY OF MERELY EXTERNAL RELIGION.

WHERE there is smoke there is sure to be fire, though it is not always the hottest fire that makes the greatest smoke; rather otherwise. That the theory of a purely internal Christianity, communicated by the Holy Spirit to each soul independently, has found acceptance with so many men of undoubted sincerity and piety; men equal in point of general learning and intelligence to the best of those whom the Church numbers in her ranks, is a fact full of help for us if we view it aright; full of hurt if we misunderstand or ignore it. If there were any real danger to our faith at a University like this, it would lie not in any supposed wickedness or general moral inferiority of the professors of an alien creed—that, indeed, would rather confirm us in our own—but in seeing the genuine goodness, the evident attractiveness of

numbers whose religious opinions are not only different from, but in many cases antagonistic to the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Now, good men are attracted only by what seems good; and are repelled only by what seems evil. There must then be some seeming good in their view of a purely internal religion, and there must be some seeming evil in the external religion of Catholicism as it presents itself to their eyes. Our faith assures us, before even we attempt to see it with our reason, that the seeming good of their system exists really far more fully in the Catholic religion; while what to them seems evil in the Church is either not really evil, or else is no part of our religion at all, but may and should be condemned as heartily by every good Catholic, as by the most fervent evangelical Protestant, or by any man of sound sense and moral integrity.

It is very important for us to know the impression, true or false, that we make upon those with whom we have to deal, and to this end we should avail ourselves of the criticism of friends and foes alike, in each case discounting for bias; for thus only shall we arrive at a knowledge, not of what we really are in ourselves—that is a secret known to God alone; but of what appearance we present to reasonably

unprejudiced eyes, and of what seeming foundation we give to others for speaking of us as they do. The misfortune is that really unprejudiced impartial people will never trouble themselves to criticize us at all, but only our well-wishers or ill-wishers, whose distorted verdicts need to be carefully corrected and set off one against the other. But of the two, the verdict of our enemies is chiefly to be weighed, as it is more necessary to know our failings, real or apparent, than to know our perfections—not of course, the verdict of our unintelligent, fanatical, ignorant enemies; but of the thoughtful, and intelligent, who are shrewd enough to realize that it can never be for their interest to be deceived; whose bias is therefore unconscious, though none the less real and perversive of clear insight.

In our last conference we dealt briefly with those two opposite errors, of which one makes Christianity all interior; the other, all exterior. We showed how untenable the former was, in the face of what we had already seen, first, as to the meaning of the Incarnation; then, as to the obvious purport and method of Christ's ministry on earth, and lastly, as to His intention of perpetuating that ministry to the end of time, and extending the Incarnation over all the world and through all the ages to come.

The contrary error of "formalism" or pure externality in religion, will now be best explained and refuted by attending to some of the objections made against an external religion by fairly clear-headed Protestants who have sense enough to weave their accusations out of what is at least superficially apparent, and not straight out of their own imaginations. We shall see in all cases how their objections, so far as they contain any element of truth and justice, tell not against an external religion, but against that abuse of it, which we have designated "formalism,"—an abuse which consists in forgetting that the whole end and purpose of the Christ and the religion outside us, is to wake up and develop the Christ and the religion that is inside us. An illustration of what I mean, is afforded by a leaflet recently issued by a well-known and strictly Protestant Bishop, wherein he says:

"There are two distinct and separate systems of Christianity in England at the present day. It is useless to deny it. Their existence is a great fact, and one that cannot be too clearly known.

"According to one system, religion is a mere *corporate business.* You are to belong to a certain body of people. By virtue of your membership of this body, vast privileges, both

for time and eternity, are conferred upon you. It matters little what you are, and what you *feel*. You are not to try yourselves by your *feelings*. You are a member of a great ecclesiastical corporation. Then all its privileges and immunities are your own. Do you belong to the one true visible ecclesiastical corporation? That is the grand question.

"According to the other system, religion is eminently *a personal business* between yourself and Christ. It will not save your soul to be an outward member of any ecclesiastical body whatever, however sound that body may be. Such membership will not wash away one sin, or give you confidence in the day of judgment. There must be personal faith in Christ,—personal dealings between yourself and God,—personal felt communion between your own heart and the Holy Ghost. Have you this personal faith? Have you this felt work of the Spirit in your soul? This is the grand question. If not, you will be lost."

You see at once how the first of these systems represents not the Catholic religion, as the writer fondly believes, but a possible and not infrequent abuse to which every external religion is necessarily liable. To be united as a visible member to the visible corporation of the Church

is indeed, for those who know, a *sine qua non* of salvation both here and hereafter; but though a condition, it is not the sole condition; nor does our salvation consist in such union, though it does not exist without it.

The second system in nearly all that it asserts, is simply and purely Catholic; but it implies certain denials that are unsound and at variance with that religion of the Incarnation, which, as we have seen, uses the visible and outward for the cure and help of the invisible and inward. As the Bishop truly says: "Religion *is* eminently a *personal business* between yourself and Christ," nor will it "save your soul to be an *outward* member of any ecclesiastical body whatever." But there is a third supposition which he denies or forgets; namely, that God has ordained this outward membership with the visible Church to be the means and condition of securing inward membership with the invisible Church; that it is through Christ's word spoken to our bodily ears that the Divine word is to be wakened in our hearts; and through the sensible touch of Christ's hands in the sacraments that our souls are to be touched and healed; and our inward sight and hearing restored.

What this writer loves in his own religion is all found in ours more easily, more abundantly;

while what he censures in ours is no part of it, but only a perversion to which it is necessarily liable,—men being the limited and fallible creatures that they are.

A slightly different form of the same objection is found in the very common allegation that Catholicism crushes out all individuality of character, and that by interposing itself as a channel of communication between God and the soul, it hinders the full and free inflow of light and grace, and that consequent expansion of the spiritual faculties which would result were there no such intermediary in the way. The individual is not treated as an individual with a proper personality; but simply as a member of a great organism, a wheel in a complex mechanism, a soldier in a vast fighting army. God's direct dealing is with the whole, not with the several parts; these He provides for through the whole and for the sake of the whole. On this supposition the individual soul is not as a flower planted out in the full sunshine, but as one languishing in a cellar, into which some streak of pale light feebly twists its way.

"My soul and my God and nothing between; no mediator," that is the Protestant ideal. Or if Christ be a mediator, it is not as one who stands between as a connecting link, one hand

in mine and the other in God's ; but as one who joins the hands of two enemies, and then steps aside leaving them locked together and reconciled.

But the visible Church is thought to interpose herself between God and the soul—a notion very intolerable to those who look on the Church as a corruptible and corrupt body of men ; who do not distinguish between the heavenly treasure and the earthly vessel which contains it ; between the leaven of unfailing truth and sacramental grace, and the unleavened mass which it struggles to permeate and transform—for the Church is the representative, not solely of Christ, the sinless and incorruptible, but of Christ together with those crowds that clung to Him and followed Him. It is thought, then, that this Church in her collective and corporate totality holds on to God, while the individual holds on to her blindly and unintelligently, and is dragged into Heaven at her skirts. She is considered as a closely organized military state —a sort of ecclesiastical Sparta—fighting for some advantage belonging to her as a totality, and distinct from the personal and private advantage of the members of which she is composed. Her subjects are, as it were, so burdened with the taxes and services entailed

by the state war, that they have neither leisure nor means for that peaceful life of self-expansion which it should be the only aim of a state to secure; their duties as soldiers interfere with and encroach beyond all reason upon their duties as men and free citizens. Thus the Church is viewed as a society existing for the dissemination among those outside her pale of certain hard-and-fast religious, moral, and political opinions; as being before all else a proselytizing body crossing land and sea to make one convert; and when made, caring nothing more for him personally, but only as for another fighting man won from the enemy and added to her own ranks. To be a good Catholic is to be a red-hot controversialist or else an insidious propagandist of the aforesaid opinions. It is not to live by them, but to fight for them; it is not to use this external religion as an instrument of personal sanctification and spiritual enlightenment; it is not to apply the divine medicine to our own cure; but simply to honour it outwardly, to acknowledge it to be the best of all instruments, the most efficacious of all medicines; and to force as many as possible to acknowledge the same, not by experimental proof, but by dialectical arguments. For such a militant Church, we are told that military obedience, blind,

unquestioning, is an absolute necessity — the one indispensable virtue whose presence will atone for the lack of all others. Swear blindly by all the Church says and does; obey blindly all that she enjoins; and then she on her part will give you her absolutions and indulgences, and will promise you Eternal Life as pay for your submission. Not *now* however; but hereafter; for Eternal Life is not the life she now wants you to lead; but something quite distinct from it; something postponed for the present, because this militant ecclesiastical life is incompatible with it; just as the life of the active soldier is incompatible with the life of the peaceful civilian. Eternal Life consists in the highest perfection and exercise of our intelligence and our will; but at present we are supposed to have no time to be holy; our duties as good militant Catholics are thought to entail the suppression of both intelligence and will; the mind and will of the Church is said to be simply substituted in all religious matters for our own mind and will—not entering into them in any way or shaping them. It is as when we commit ourselves passively to the judgment and guidance of another, and do not in any way understand or appropriate his mind, but simply hang on to it to save ourselves trouble.

This is the impression that Catholicism makes on many fairly intelligent outsiders, and would, indeed, there were nothing in the attitude of many of us towards the Church, to give any appearance of plausibility to the notion!

Doubtless there is something very attractive to our love of freedom from interference, something that appeals to the Protestantism latent in every human heart in this idea of the soul dealing directly with God, and needing the aid of no creature whatever—church or minister or sacrament; there is something in it especially congenial to the independence of the English mind. We have lately heard confession, the Mass, sacerdotalism, and other points of the Catholic religion condemned, simply and finally on the score of being repugnant to Englishmen; good enough perhaps for the decadent Latin races, but uncongenial to the Anglo-Saxon mind. This were sound sense had God given us no divine external religion, and had He left us free to interpret our religious instincts for ourselves, and to find expression for them in our own way. Then indeed the nations of the earth might lawfully have been as various in their outward religions, as in their languages and customs. But as things are, even the English mind is not at liberty to shape an

external religion for itself, but must, under pain of fatal isolation, shape itself into agreement with that which God has revealed; with that religion which is Catholic or universal as being adaptable to all stages and varieties of civilization—ancient or modern; eastern or western; Latin or Teutonic—to the childhood of races as to their maturity or old age; to periods of decadence as to periods of renaissance—a religion expressly designed to bind together all nations of the world in what is the highest and chiefest human interest.

But quite apart from this divine revelation, God, in the very nature of things, makes the development of man's religious faculty dependent upon his fellows. Just as He gives each of us the power of language, and yet makes its development depend on our being born amongst those who are in possession of a language ready formed, which we learn by imitation; so our religious faculty would scarce assert itself in us perceptibly, were it not stimulated by the religion of those around us. Hence this idea of God alone being the soul's teacher were in any case too ambitious for creatures such as we are; the limitations of our nature forbid it, as much as do the conditions of revelation. Furthermore, we not only need the

society of others in order to know God and to have the occasions and means of serving Him, but God refuses to be united to us in our solitude. We have first to unite ourselves with our Incarnate Lord and with all who are already united with Him; and then as members of this mystical unity, God deals with us and quickens us; just as the animal soul will not dwell in or quicken any separated part or member of the body, but only the whole united body made up of parts and members. But then, even as the body is not some third thing interposed between the soul and the parts of the body, so neither is Christ and His Church some third thing interposed like a wall between God and the members of Christ and His Church.

Contrariwise, it is precisely because we are parts of Christ and parts of His Church that God's immediate intercourse with our soul is so much more abundant and frequent than it would be were we left in our solitude to approach God alone, instead of hand in hand with Christ and His faithful.

"Individualism," again, is a word to conjure with in these days, but then, like "liberty" and "equality" and similar cries, it is susceptive of various meanings, right and wrong. Liberty, we know, is not freedom from all restraint, but

from all undue or hurtful restraint; it means the opportunities and conditions of the best and fullest life we are capable of, and this can only be secured by association, by dependence upon others, by self-restraint and self-sacrifice. It means not doing what we please, but what we ought. Similarly the individualism which dissociates the member from the organism which lops the branch off the vine is fatal to its vitality and fruitfulness. It is based on the false idea, borrowed from the imagination, that men's souls are, as their bodies, locally separate and independent atoms, connected at most by the bond of descent from a common father, as though the multitude of souls were not in some sort interpenetrated by an identical life, converging as they do to God their common root, from whom they are ever springing, new-born, like divergent rays from the source of light; in Whom they live, and Who lives in the centre of each of them, one and identical and common to all. Ignorant or forgetful of this, the false individualism, so popular in these days, would exempt us from many irksome duties and restrictions only by excluding us from the common life which courses through the veins of the community whose members we are; it would delude us with the fancy that we are

isolated independent units, made for an isolated and independent happiness ; as though anything less than God and the whole community of our fellow-creatures, whereof we are but part, were the adequate object for which our heart had been made, or could expand it to its full stretch.

Applied to religion, this theory would make each soul a little church in itself, sanctified alone and saved alone ; helped perhaps and served by others, but not better sanctified or saved because of their sanctification. But it is only in association with others and by recognizing ourselves as parts of a living organism that we can really develop our nature aright. We are primarily God's, and our own only secondarily. There is no *complete* individuality and independence but God's. The earth compared with the moon is independent and individual ; but compared with the sun it is itself subject and incomplete ; even as the sun may be, in regard to a more central body. We allow then only that individualism which recognizes the fact that our happiness does not lie compactly in the well-being of our solitary self, but in that of the whole community —God and our fellows—to which as members we are subject.

This is the great principle embodied and symbolized in the doctrine of the visible Church and of the obligation of Church-membership as a condition of salvation.

But if such membership is a necessary condition for our spiritual growth and development, it must not be supposed that there is no room for individuality. Unity is not uniformity; sameness of spirit is compatible with, nay, it requires, an infinite variety of manifestation. A military and militant state, it is true, tends to turn all its subjects into soldiers, and to reduce them to the uniformity of nine-pins in outward appearance and carriage, and to some degree even in inward character; because it aims immediately, not at individual life, but at a remote condition of individual life, namely, at conquest or self-defence. Public tranquillity and security is a necessary condition, but is not the end and substance of a happy and prosperous life. Men do not normally live in order to fight, but they fight in order to live. For the time being, they have often to give up and lay aside their domestic and civil life in order to fight; but it is only that they may resume it again more securely. Peace is ever the motive of just war.

But the end for which the Catholic Church

exists, is not an end that is distinct from, or can interfere with, the fullest and highest life of each single one of her members. What she toils and fights for principally is, not a remote condition of our enlightenment and sanctification, but the thing itself. As the vine lives only to produce grapes, so the Church exists and labours only to produce good men, that is, to reproduce the life of Christ as fully as possible in each particular soul; to bring minds into conformity with the mind of Christ; and hearts into conformity with the heart of Christ. Of course she also necessarily fights for the remoter conditions of this individual sanctification of souls—for moral and just legislation, for freedom in the exercise of her jurisdiction, for a Christian and Catholic educational system; yet she does not stop there, but carries her work up to the point where only our own free-will can hinder its perfect accomplishment.

Still it must not be thought that the same spiritual uniformity is to be desired among Catholics as exists between the several grapes of a cluster. That same divine Truth and Goodness which is incarnate in Christ, though simple in itself, is inexhaustible in the infinite diversity of its possible manifestations. Each particular soul is capable of reflecting only some single

and individual aspect of it; and even all souls taken collectively together, as one complex organism of diverse and harmonious parts, exhibit at best but a fraction of the perfection hid in Christ and scattered among them—as it were, put in commission. No two ages, no two nationalities, no two individuals receive Christ or receive the Catholic religion into the same mould; and though what is received is the same, yet the measure of its reception, the shape it takes, the result of the combination, is always different. "I have many things to say to you," said our Lord to the Church of that day, "but you cannot bear them now." As Catholics we all say the same things and we do the same things; we repeat the same creeds and we use the same sacraments; but how differently! "*Vide paris sumptionis, quam sit dispar exitus*," says Aquinas; words which we may apply generally to the results of the external Catholic religion on different souls. The agent is always the same, but the reaction is never the same.

The Blessed in Heaven all behold the same God, yet one penetrates immeasurably further than another into the infinite depth of Truth. And for ourselves here below, the word "God" means the same to all of us, substantially or in outline; but the filling in of that outline is the

same for no two alike, and is capable of indefinite correction and completion.

So as regards the teaching of the Church, and the grace of her sacraments. There is outside us, in this external religion of the Incarnation, an inexhaustible source of spiritual light and strength which all Catholics agree in acknowledging, but there the uniformity ends; for as to the manner and the degree in which they draw upon this treasury and appropriate and use its wealth, there neither is, nor ought to be, nor can be, perfect sameness in kind but the purest possible individualism—one body but no two members alike, one spirit but an endless diversity of manifestations. Had Christ been merely some human hero or saint, the imitation of His finite and measurable character by His followers would have produced in them an uniformity not merely of spirit and principle, but of manifestation and outward expression; such as we notice in schools and sects and religious orders. His life would have been a sort of rigid rule, helpful and suitable for some, but not for all, interfering with rather than developing the exhibition of personality and natural character; but because His Divine goodness was infinite and inexhaustible, all might imitate it to their utmost capacity, as closely

as possible, and yet no two be alike. So also the Church's truths, though cased in finite forms and expressions, though uttered in words which are the same for all who know their creed and catechism, are in themselves inexhaustible; transcending the deepest human intelligence, striking no two minds at the same angle of incidence nor ever reflected twice in precisely the same way.

It is therefore only so far as we are mere formalists, and make our Catholicity consist wholly in repeating the same words, in performing and submitting to the same rites; it is only so far as we forget that external Christianity is designed to evoke, elevate, and strengthen the *anima naturaliter Christiana* which is within us, that the abuse of Catholicity tends to destroy individualism by producing a dead uniformity.

And if we are in a true sense soldiers, militant members of a militant Church, yet this warfare is not distinct from that in which our private spiritual life consists; nor does the service of the Church withdraw us from that one paramount avocation which is the chief end of our existence. In the secular state we have to distinguish between our duties as citizens and our duties as men; but in the Church it is just

by perfecting ourselves as individuals that we best profit the whole body. Here our public and personal duties never clash; they are distinct only in thought and name; not in reality. "*Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus*," says our Saviour. It is in the measure that the light of Catholic truth has become our own, has caught on to us as flame to a torch, and penetrated our life, that we shall be quietly and unnoticeably effectual in its dissemination. As long as we are mere controversialists, trying to impose upon others an external rule of belief and practice which we have not begun to appreciate and use for the internal reformation of our own mind and heart, we know nothing of the methods of Christ's warfare; and we but hinder what we would forward: *Nescitis cujus spiritus estis.*

Lastly, Eternal Life is not a bribe in the distant hereafter to stimulate the belligerent Catholic, or to tame him into blind obedience to a system of drill which he cannot understand or sympathize with. Eternal life begins here and now; and is the life of the divine and eternal part of us; the life of an intelligence and love whose objects are incorruptible, independent of place and of time. And this is the life which is aroused and kindled in us ever

more and more in the measure that we make energetic use of the sources of divine light and grace which God has put at our disposal in the external religion of the Incarnation; that is, in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

To be, not a formalist, but a true Catholic; to be not only outwardly united to the visible Church, but also quickened inwardly with her spirit, and nourished with the blood that flows in her veins; this *is* Eternal Life. It is not merely the condition or price of its future bestowal; but is its present actualization in a far fuller measure than is in anywise possible for those who are separated from these external supernatural aids. "I came that they might have life," says Christ, "and that they might have it more abundantly," more easily, more freely. Vital Catholicism *is* Eternal Life; the life not merely of the highest human intelligence, the purest human affection, the life not merely of man at his best and noblest; but of the Spirit of God mysteriously mingled with the spirit of man.

LECTURE V.

ABUSE OF EXTERNAL MEANS OF GRACE.

One of the great problems of education in almost every department is the right adjustment of liberty and restriction; in other words, to know exactly how far people should be helped, supported, and protected, and how far they should be thrown upon themselves and left with a certain freedom of action. An excess in either direction is fatal. Those who are insufficiently helped and guided are exposed to temptations and difficulties altogether beyond their strength and experience; those who are over-helped and over-guided never develop that independence and spontaneity of action, which is the very end of all education. For education is but the means; whereas life, the best and fullest life we are capable of, is the end. A thing is alive so far as it moves itself; but if it is dead or lifeless, it moves just so far as it is moved, and then comes to a dead stop.

Now this power of self-movement, self-guidance, self-government, is not increased in any direction by doing things that we can do quite easily and without effort. It may be maintained and kept up to the mark by such actions; or it may be lost by the continued omission of such actions; that is, by getting out of practice. Nor, again, is it increased by attempting patent impossibilities; but only by attempting such things as are at once difficult in some degree, but still possible. The problem of education, therefore, is just to help the learner so far as a task is at present impossible for him and beyond his reasonable powers; and yet on no account to help him any further; but to let him encounter difficulties even with the certainty that he will fail many times and suffer many pains and humiliations ere he acquire the sought-for skill. Were we always to guide the pen in the child's trembling hand, were we never to leave him a chance of going wrong and of making mistakes, he would never learn to write; and so we only give him as much help as is absolutely necessary; more at first and then less, until at last the habit of spontaneous and independent activity is perfectly formed.

Of course, as we have already said, no finite being is independent of all help; and the extent

of our independence is at the best grotesquely limited; yet such as it is, it is within the limits of that little region that our liberty is exercised, and that our personality and individualism lies. Whatever hinders the development of any sort of vitality, any power of self-movement that is latent in us, cramps the fulness of our spiritual being, and inflicts the worst of all injuries upon us. If it is the part of charity to help and succour and serve those who really need it, there is no greater "uncharity" than the weak, short-sighted indulgence which regards all pain indiscriminately as an evil; and which unwisely helps those who can already help themselves, and in so doing exempts them from that needful exertion and conflict with difficulty, wherein the very food and medicine of their moral growth is found.

And this principle throws an important light upon the whole idea of the religion of the Incarnation. It is not possible that God, whose Nature is the root of all law, the cause of all that is necessary in the essence of things, should Himself act contrary to the law which His Being imposes upon finite creatures; or that He who is Charity should so fail in true charity as to offer us any help whatsoever, natural or supernatural, simply to save us from salutary

labour and difficulty; or should wish to spare us any exertion of mind or will whereby our hidden energies should be brought out, exercised, and strengthened. For God to expose us to superhuman and invincible temptations, to overwhelm and confuse us with more liberty than we can possibly profit by; to leave us absolutely unguided and unprotected, and throw us wholly on our own resources, would be to destroy us. That is the judgment which they bring upon themselves who presumptuously spurn His needful aid. But on the other hand we may hold it for a certain and universal truth, that God, in offering us helps, never intends to spare us any profitable labour or superable difficulty which we should otherwise have had to face; that in giving us a revelation of truth and in providing us with sacramental means of grace, He does not so much intend to make easier what is already possible, as to make possible a far more difficult and supernatural salvation. He does not intend to exempt us from one particle of that endurable pain and trouble which would naturally have been necessary for the perfecting of our mind and the acquisition of moral virtues; but simply to give us capacity for a far higher spiritual perfection, and therewith the power and the duty of exerting our-

selves far more than would otherwise have been possible for us or incumbent upon us. This is almost a truism when stated, yet is often as far from our practical recognition as though it were the greatest of paradoxes.

Therefore, as we said in our opening conference, when God endowed our first parents in Paradise with wonderful gifts of soul and body, with grace and knowledge and self-control and dominion over nature, and immortality, it was not that they might luxuriate idly in the consciousness of these gifts, but that they might trade with them as with so much gold to be put out to usury and rigorously accounted for; it was that instead of being responsible for the one or two talents of unassisted nature, they might enter upon a ten-fold or hundred-fold responsibility; it was not that they might without trouble be set down at the goal of ordinary human perfection, to rest there; but that what else had been their scarcely attainable end, might now be their starting-point for a supernatural end—a perfection more divine than human. It was not that they might be carried easily on the breast of a full tide high above the rocks and shoals of temptations at an immeasurable depth below them, but that they might be capable of profiting by a temptation

altogether superhuman and beyond their natural forces—a temptation worthy to decide the destiny of a whole race.

And it is in precisely the same light that we are to view the supernatural helps accorded to us by the religion of the Incarnation. We often hear people speaking as though the grace which superabounded in our Saviour, or in His Blessed Mother, or in His saints, made the will of God easy for them—far easier than it could ever be for us; whereas in truth it only made them capable of greater labour and suffering and temptation than we can ever be called upon to endure. It increased their latent power, but it also increased their responsibility and called for a greater exertion and putting forth of that power—which exertion can never be without pain. It is true to say that it made things harder for them, rather than easier. That they did not sin, means that they suffered more; for it is easier to yield and more painful to hold out. And it was because they were faithful to grace and held out and would not yield, that God gave them more grace and still more—*habenti dabitur;* and the reason He gives us so little is because we will not hold out, but shrink from effort. We fancy that more grace would make things easier for us; that it would spare us

some exertion that we *can* already make, but are unwilling to make; and so we pray for grace and do not get it; for God only gives more power to those who are using the power they have already got; who exert themselves to their utmost and who want to exert themselves still more.

Roughly, the supernatural helps given to us by the Catholic religion are of two kinds—strength for our will; light and understanding for our mind; in other words, sacramental grace and infallible teaching. With regard to both one and the other, it has often been asserted that in the actual working their whole tendency is to hinder rather than promote spiritual development, to discourage spontaneity, to destroy independence of action and thought in all religious matters, to accustom us from our infancy onwards to moral and intellectual crutches, and to persuade us that we cannot possibly do without them. Notice, we are not wasting breath in dealing with the absurd charge that Catholics are tyrannized over by their priests in the affairs of every-day life, that they are not allowed to think for themselves or act for themselves even in matters secular and profane; but only with the more plausible notion that their Church says to them equivalently: "Come to

me, you that labour and are burdened, and I will make goodness cheap and easy for you. You shrink from the difficulty of mortification and self-conquest ; very well, receive my sacraments instead ; you shrink from the labour of thought and meditation about divine things ; very well, be passive, and accept my teaching instead ; let me think for you, and act for you ; and do you be passive and obedient and inert."

Is there any seeming foundation for this calumny, for this notion that the Church, instead of stimulating us to help ourselves, tries to persuade us that we are more helpless than we really are, in order that we may depend upon her and submit to her more utterly ; that she trades upon our indolence and softness and never lets us down out of her arms lest we should discover that we can walk alone ?

Yes, undoubtedly ; but the foundation for the charge is not to be sought in any haziness and uncertainty on the part of the Church's clear and unceasing warnings ; it is easily and abundantly found in the perverse heedlessness and inattention of her children to the very obvious principle above insisted on as to the meaning and right use of helps of every kind, natural or supernatural, human or divine.

Our Lord tells us that we are to pray and to

watch so as to resist temptation. Prayer, comprehends all sorts of dependence on God—all the means of increasing grace and spiritual energy; watching, comprehends all sorts of dependence on self, every kind of co-operation with grace, every sort of exertion or putting forth of that energy won through prayer and the sacraments. Neither condition avails without the other. We must rely upon God and rely upon ordinary means. The Pelagians thought that their own natural vigilance was enough; and this is an error in which we all follow them at some time or another of our life — perhaps always to some little extent. But just as dangerous is the error of a certain pious fatalism which confounds trust in God with presumption; which regards prayer and the sacraments as substitutes for vigilance, instead of as means to it.

"Pray and watch" are not co-ordinate duties; but the former is directed to the latter as means to an end. *Orate ut vigiletis* is the true sense; pray that you may have the inclination, the energy, the perseverance, to watch and to use every possible natural means that prudence can devise in order to combat temptations and conquer yourself. So understood and so used, prayer and the means of grace, far from sparing

us any exertion we are already capable of, simply make us capable of more and demand more of us in consequence.

But naturally we all shrink from that exertion which is the indispensable condition of our growth in any direction ; our tendency as finite creatures is to sink down towards the zero from which we were lifted by creation, rather than to struggle upwards towards God and to correspond with the creative movement by which He ever draws us from nothingness towards Himself, as a flower is drawn out of the earth by the sun's magic. We always try the path of least resistance—the cheapest, the easiest route. We are ever the too-ready dupes of any one who pretends to have found out some trouble-saving method of salvation ; something we can get through once and for all and have done with ; some substitute for weary vigilance, and tiresome perseverance, and bitter mortification, and for the other necessary causes without which even God Himself often could not ensure the desired effects. We clutch eagerly at a miraculous medal, a girdle, an infallible prayer, a scapular, a novena, a pledge, a vow—all helps, in their way, all excellent if used rightly as stimulants to greater exertion, greater vigilance, greater prayerfulness ; but if adopted as substi-

tutes for labour, for the eternally necessary and indispensable means, then, no longer helps, but most hurtful superstitions. Do they stimulate or do they relax our efforts?—that is the one test as to whether we are using such things to our help or abusing them to our hurt. We shall not be saved by anything we hang round our necks, except so far as the grace it conveys to us in virtue of the Church's blessing stimulates us to that exertion and watchfulness by which alone, under God, we are to sanctify and save ourselves.

And what is true of these devotions and methods which the Catholic Church certainly tolerates as capable of a right use, and which her Pontiffs have often even promoted and indulgenced, is true also of prayer and the sacraments—those means of grace which God Himself has appointed and blessed. All-needful as they are for that fulness of spiritual life to which Christianity calls us; yet they can be and often are perverted in such wise as to be no longer helps, but positive hindrances. As intended by God they are designed, not to save us any spiritual exertion which is needful for us; not to exempt us from the duty of watchfulness, of retrospection and foresight and circumspection; but solely to make greater

exertion possible for us; to put more into us, that we may have more to draw out of ourselves, more to educate. The perceptible part of the result of prayer and the sacraments, if we do not misuse them, is not a miraculous infusion of those good habits which can be formed only by repeated actions and persevering efforts, but rather a deepened spiritual insight, clearer ideals of perfection, dissatisfaction with our past, desire of advancing to something better, resolution to face greater exertion.

But these seeds, these possibilities and beginnings of good, have to be fostered and furthered by attending to them, praying about them, above all, by acting upon them at once—else they die away fruitless and leave us worse and harder than before. *Facienti quod est in se non deerit Deus*—God will not fail those in their difficulties who do all that they can; but if they do less than they can; if there be a store of unused energy lying idle in their souls; if they pray only to escape exertion they are already capable of, and not to become capable of greater exertion, if they pray more only in order that they may watch less, then they pray in vain, and perhaps to their hurt.

Stranger still, even mortification, asceticism, and self-denial, may be, and often are, abused

in just the same way, when they are used as substitutes for the natural and necessary means of attaining virtue. That attainment often depends essentially on just the one thing we will not do, the one sacrifice we will not make. We will do anything else, something much harder perhaps in itself, but not that. We know right well, for example, that chastity depends on a thousand little carefulnesses, singly quite possible and easy, yet collectively hard and tiresome; but instead of this sacrifice, fixed by God and by the inherent nature of things, we want to substitute another less troublesome; we want to buy off a continual tax by paying down a lump sum. We want to do something violent that can be got over and done with; some big austerity that will purchase for us a miraculous exemption from the natural consequence of our actions, that will permit us to be quite careless about the aforesaid little things. Our confessor wisely advises more frequent Communion; we try, and are no better. And why? Because we go to the Sacrament, not to get stimulus for greater exertion, but to be miraculously delivered from the need of exertion; to be exempted from the ordinary laws of cause and effect.

In the light of these considerations we shall

have no difficulty in facing fairly, what otherwise might seem grave problems, offered by facts which are undeniable.

On the one hand we often find that, both in ourselves and, as far as we can judge, in others, the fruit of much prayer and mortification and frequenting of the sacraments, is far less than what we might thoughtlessly have expected *à priori*. When we think of the stupendous offering of Himself which God makes to the soul in the Blessed Eucharist, it cannot but astonish us how little perceptible difference our reiterated Communions make in us; it cannot but astonish us how those who communicate almost daily, such as priests and religious and many devout lay-folk, are so little different from others; so little like what we should have been led to expect. If their Communions are bad, such persons ought to be so much worse than they are; if good, so much better. But *de facto* they are very often painfully ordinary people, as mediocre in virtue as the rest. We cannot of course judge individuals by outward results, since we never know the extent of the resistance particular souls have to contend with; but we may fairly so judge classes, as contrasted with other classes. All this would indeed be a difficulty if sacraments worked their perceptible

effect as medicines do, independently of the free co-operation of the recipient. This perceptible effect is the increased putting forth of spiritual energy which the sacrament renders possible; but which only our co-operation and effort can render actual. God gives the talent, but it is not perceptible till we begin to use it. That there is an imperceptible effect of some kind —an increase of substantial grace, as they call it—whenever the sacrament is not actually profaned, is common Catholic teaching; but for practical purposes, what boots this energy stored away in the soul except so far as it is used and turned to account? We are to be judged, not by our powers, but by our works. Buried talents will not profit us. True we cannot lose habitual grace but by sin; yet is there no sin of sloth in leaving God's gold rusting in the earth when He has bidden us trade with it? *Serve nequam* is God's verdict on such a one.

Similarly it need not astonish us as it might otherwise do, that souls can draw nigh time after time to the Sacrament of Penance, and yet be so lacking in the penitential broken-hearted spirit which it is the purpose of that ordinance to increase in us more and more. To wash away sin is not like washing away soil from a garment, which once done cannot be

more done; but sin is extruded from the soul by the introduction of the love of God and hatred of what is contrary to God. For this reason the same sin can be ever more and more forgiven, and may be confessed and absolved again and again. *Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea—Lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor.* We can be washed ever cleaner and cleaner; and made ever whiter and whiter. But here, again, because penance and the penitential spirit is something laborious and troublesome, we are disposed to use the Sacrament of Penance as a substitute for the virtue of penance instead of as a means to increase that virtue in ourselves. We draw near to it often, not with a mind to make things harder for ourselves, but to make things easier; not to increase our responsibilities, but to shirk them.

Then, on the other hand, there is the fact that we very often find those who are inculpably deprived of the aids of external religion, Catholics and non-Catholics, producing much more in the way of results than those who abound in sacraments. Or, again, our personal experience and that of others will sometimes tell us, though not commonly, that we progressed more rapidly in periods of rarer Communions, than in those of more frequent Communions.

Or, what might seem strangest of all, there are the by no means unheard-of cases of some who, after abandoning the religious practices and even the faith of the Church, have attained to continence, or industry, or sobriety, or self-control, or some other virtue which they had in vain sought to secure by means of the sacraments or of ascetical practices.

All these phenomena have one and the same ready explanation. The very fact of having abundant helps ready to hand, is a snare to those who misunderstand the meaning and use of helps and who treat them as substitutes for that exertion which they are designed to render possible and to stimulate. Let these helps be withdrawn, and at once such persons feel that they are thrown entirely upon their own internal resources, that they must put forth all their energy or else perish; and under this apprehension they begin for the first time in their lives, to use the strength that was within them all along; to make that painful exertion for which they secretly, almost unconsciously, hoped the frequentation of the sacraments might serve as a substitute.

Even the apostate and renegade may easily find in pride, or in ambition, or in some other form of intense self-love, a stronger stimulus

to exertion than the love of God ever furnished him with in the days of his belief and piety. Such a victory over self is what Augustine calls a *victoria vitiosa*, *i.e.*, the control of one vice by another; and the continence or sobriety so produced is only a manifestation of the strength of the master-vice. Some of the strongest-seeming men on earth have been the weakest. The pride, or ambition, or lust, which enslaved them, also enslaved all their other vices to its own service, and made them temperate, enduring, thrifty, prudent, bold. Yet their force was but the force of a falling body. But we need not suppose that it is always so with the apostate. The change for the better in his morals may find sufficient explanation in the fact that, during his years of piety he was using prayer and mortification simply as substitutes for vigilance and not as means to it; and that what he abandoned were, as abused by him, not means of grace, but hindrances of nature.

Thus we see how a superficial consideration of such facts as these, might seem to the thoughtless to justify the charge, that the helps which the sacraments hold out to us, far from strengthening and stimulating our will, tend rather to enfeeble and enervate it. We see that

this is simply to confound the use with the abuse of the sacraments, and that it is an objection which would hold equally against the whole economy of the Incarnation—nay, against every help offered us by God or man, not only in the supernatural, but even in the natural order. God does not give a people a rich and luxuriant soil in order to make them idle or to save them exertion, yet more often than not they so misuse His liberality that it makes for decadence rather than progress. Deplorable as such perversity may be in things temporal, it is in addition, sinful and inexcusable in things eternal. Doubtless it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the Judgment, than for the cities which Christ vainly blessed with His miracles and teaching ; and for heretics and pagans and agnostics than for many a Catholic ; yet we may not on that account even harbour the impious wish that God, in affording us such superabundant helps and graces, had not called us to such terrible responsibilities — to such multiplied labours and exertions.

De facto, a sterner soil may be better for us than a richer, if it cause us to work harder ; yet this is due to our own perversity, not to the nature of the gift which in itself is a poorer one. *De facto*, it were better for Judas had he never

been born, yet not because birth could ever be an evil of its own nature, or other than an unmerited blessing, but because of his own perverse misuse of God's mercy.

So too, *de facto*, it were better for many a Catholic to have had fewer sacraments, fewer means of grace, if he has misused them as a pretext for less exertion than he would actually have put forth had he been thrown more entirely upon himself; and yet God did, and intended to do, for him what was the more liberal and kinder thing; to confer upon him that more lavish grace, of which it is said: "To whom much is given, from him much shall be required."

LECTURE VI.

ABUSE OF EXTERNAL MEANS OF LIGHT.

In our last Conference we dealt with one particular form of that abuse which we have agreed to call "externality" in religion—an abuse diametrically opposed to the contrary error of mere "internality," that is, the denial of the utility, the need, and the existence of an obligatory outward religion. We considered, so to say, the theory of helps in general, and then, dividing the supernatural helps which the religion of the Incarnation affords us, into means of grace or spiritual strength, and means of light or spiritual guidance, we saw how the former might be either rightly used to stimulate and increase our capacity for exertion and vigilance; or else wrongly used as substitutes for efforts already well within our capacity, with the effect of enervating and eventually paralyzing the natural vigour of our will. We do not mean that such Communions and confessions are positively unworthy or sacrilegious,

but that whatever grace they convey lies idle in the soul, and is therefore simply fruitless of all perceptible effect; because we do not approach with a real desire to exert ourselves more, but with a subtle hope that we shall hereby need to exert ourselves less.

The sacraments were not designed to save us any salutary effort, or to make cheaper for us that natural virtue obligatory on all mankind; but rather to oblige us each time anew to some degree of Christian perfection and to the exertion of those still greater efforts needed for its attainment.

Let us now consider how the means of light and spiritual guidance may similarly be either used or abused. As free, intelligent creatures, it is our special dignity to be in some measure, and always under God, self-formed, self-taught, self-moved, self-guided. Of course our independence is exceedingly limited, and what we can do for ourselves is only a little fraction of what God and our fellow-creatures have to do for us; but little as it is, in that little our personality is exercised. Were we, however, proudly to discard any available help, simply on the score that we prefer to do everything for ourselves from the very beginning; were we to refuse to enter into our heritage

from the past, to reap and enjoy the fruits of others' labours, to accept the accumulated results of their experience and reflection and activity, we should not thereby in any way enlarge the field of our self-acquired perfections; but should only be sacrificing priceless advantages to the gratification of a short-sighted self-defeating love of independence. For there is no indignity in being helped in order to exert ourselves more; but only in being helped in order to shirk exertion.

As money is an instrument for getting money; so truth and knowledge are instruments for getting truth and knowledge; and the more that others can impart to us by way of a starting capital, the greater and more fruitful is the mental exertion we are capable of; and consequently by such help rightly used, the field of our self-acquired advantages will be indefinitely enlarged. Take what you actually know of history or of science, and compare it with the most that your unassisted efforts could possibly have attained to; and you will see that not only your acquired knowledge, but even your power of acquiring knowledge, is multiplied many times over through assistance received from others. For this reason, to live in the company of others, far from hindering the development of

personality and self-sufficingness, is the most indispensable condition thereof.

We may be sure then that when God gifted our first parents in Paradise with preternaturally infused knowledge, it was not that they might live ever after inertly in a state of mental stagnation; but that starting with minds full-formed and well instructed, they might set the talent out to usury and make it the instrument of such an intellectual activity and advance as had been nowise possible for them had they been left to their merely naturally resources—individual and social.

Similarly with regard to the supernatural revelation accorded to fallen man (piecemeal through the prophets of the Old Law, and in its final plenitude by the lips of the Word-made-flesh, who has committed it to the custody of the Holy Ghost in His Church), we must not for a moment imagine that God intended hereby to exempt us from any particle of that careful thought and consideration which we are naturally bound to give to the affairs of our soul and eternity before all else; or that He intended to save us the profitable trouble of using and training our minds in the matter of religion. His design rather tended to multiply our labours by giving us more material to work upon; and,

by the added light of every new truth, to increase our powers of spiritual apprehension. Undoubtedly a truth that we find out for ourselves is our own in a more real way than a truth which, being simply put into us from outside, is nowise our own product—just as the wealth we produce by our own labour is our possession in a sense that no gift ever can be. But as our wealth-earning power depends ultimately on the gifts and helps we receive from God and from our fellow-men, so our truth-earning power is proportioned to the amount of ready-made truths communicated to us at the outset. Doubtless it were grander to know these latter independently, as God does; but being what we are, it is far better we should know them in this less perfect, dependent way, than be left in our helplessness and not know them at all. For so it is, that our mind is most helpless and dependent in regard to the most necessary truths, whether natural or supernatural. In one case God has to infuse the first principles into our intelligence; in the other He has to reveal them; and it is only after He has thus far helped us, that we can begin to help ourselves on a little further.

Far from being called to less mental activity in regard to religious questions and the ultimate

problems of human life, the educated Catholic is called to a great deal more than others, to whom a narrower measure of truth and light has been committed in trust. And yet it is commonly objected against us that the tendency of our belief in the Church's infallible guidance, is to paralyze our intelligence in this department, by encouraging us to use the judgment of the Church as a substitute for our own judgment, rather than as a rule or instrument for its formation and development, as a spur to set it in rapid motion. The Catholic is likened to one who is content to possess the best books on a given subject, without ever attempting to master their contents with a view to becoming himself somewhat expert therein. This objection, which one hears very commonly, is put into the mouth of one of the characters in a recent Catholic novel.[1] "I never yet met a Protestant," he says, "who was not anxious to talk religion; nor a Catholic who was not anxious to avoid it. Why?" "Because," says the other, "we are so secure of our religion it does not interest us. You know there must be doubt in order to create interest." "How is it," another acute observer asks, "that in all religious questions

[1] *The Triumph of Failure.* By Rev. P. A. Sheehan.

Catholics are in some way much less interesting to speak to than Protestants?"

That the fact is so to some extent, I think we must admit; that it should be so we must altogether deny; nor can we allow, that to be secure of a truth justifies our losing all interest in it; nor yet, that outside a comparatively small oasis of revealed truths concerning which we are secure, there does not stretch an almost infinite region of religious problems which God has left to our disputation, that we ourselves may bring to bear upon them the supernatural light of revelation which He has given us.

It will help, in dealing with this question, to recall an old-fashioned theological distinction almost forgotten in these days when the spread of education is supposed to have put all classes at an equal advantage in passing judgment upon every sort of question. Yet this old distinction between the *majores* and the *minores*, that is, between the adepts and the laymen in each department, is too deeply fixed in the nature of things for any educational system to uproot. It is a pleasant popular fiction, that no truly enlightened modern ever believes aught that he has not either seen with his own eyes, or demonstrated from the root upwards to his own

satisfaction ; that he takes nothing on hearsay, or on faith, or by way of tradition ; that he never thinks and says anything solely because his father said it before him, or because everybody says it all round him. It is a pleasant fiction, but none the less a fiction ; for full nine-tenths of the knowledge of the most independent thinker that ever lived, is necessarily either taken blindly on trust or else based on premisses so taken, and were he to reject everything he had not personally verified, his mental condition would be little different from that of a clever savage. Still this same independent thinker may be classed with the *majores*, so far as he uses the help derived from others, to help himself on a little further than they have carried him, and adds some little quota to the common stock of enlightenment. But so far as of necessity, he is chiefly taught by tradition, and simply repeats and imitates what others say and think ; so far as he receives passively into his brain the impression worked upon it by the entire deposit of knowledge existing in the society he belongs to, he is on a par with the *minores*.

For the practical purposes of life, this traditional method is the one best fitted for us by the wisdom of God. But it is only by the

labour of the *majores*, of the active and independent thinkers, that this body of public truth, which they break and distribute to the multitude, is increased, modified, and corrected ; and therefore such a class of thinkers is a necessity for every progressive community. Roughly speaking this is the educated class, so far as education implies a power of rediscovering for ourselves what tradition has taught us ; of setting the form and stamp of our own individual mind upon it ; of realizing what we have hitherto only repeated ; a power of active and productive intelligence, as opposed to merely passive and receptive intelligence.

The mission of Christ and the Church, as we said, is primarily to the uneducated masses, and to the educated, only so far as they are willing to submit to the method of tradition and faith, to the "folly of preaching," by which alone it is possible for the multitudes to lay hold of divine truth. For our own practical sanctification we must all be content to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as little children with the "common people who heard Him gladly," or else to stay outside. The keenest spiritual insight is not enough to steady us in the hour of temptation, but only faith in the word of another, and that other, God. It is upon His mind we must

then rely, and not upon our own ; on the eternal enduring rock, not on the shivering sand.

Still it remains true that revelation is not designed to exempt us from any exercise of religious thought that we are naturally capable of ; but rather to increase that capacity and to make our exertions more fruitful.

Hence, our Lord requires of educated Catholics besides faith, a certain intelligence about their religion, proportioned to their general ability and opportunities ; nor can any man be credited with very deep or vital faith, if it is not a faith that seeks intelligence as far as intelligence is possible for him ; if from being a matter of practical utility for him, it does not come to be also one of intellectual interest.

This wakening of intellectual interest in religion, as in any other subject, depends upon our realizing that it is connected with the whole body of our thought, that it is a factor needed to set our disconnected views of life in order, and reduce them to unity. Children usually accept blindly the political views of their parents, without realizing or inquiring why such stress should be laid upon them, until the growth of their own mind, and the expansion of their personal and social interests, force them to look at the matter independently.

But far more than politics, religion is a subject which is most closely wrapt up with the great problems of life, practical and speculative ; and hence we find that no man whose mind is really awake, and who can be called educated in any general sense, can afford to be without some definite views about religion—whether for, or against, whether dogmatic or sceptic. In England indeed, owing to the above-mentioned "spread of education," religious questions are a matter of interest and discussion in almost every class, high and low, and in every school, Christian or anti-Christian.

Are we to except the Catholic community alone from intelligent sympathy with these vital problems ?

The novelist we quoted suggests that where there is certainty and no doubt, there can be no interest, no discussion ; if we have found the truth, or if we have never lost it, we do not search for it ; if we are not searching, we are not interested. There is a good deal of reason in this. Our very position as Catholics supposes that we accept without hesitation all the official teaching of the Church ; that we have no doubt about the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, the Priesthood, or the Sacraments ; or about any of the momentous dogmas of faith. Whatever

the Church has left open to our disputation is, from the nature of the case, as yet unimportant, whatever it may become in future ages. Our internecine controversies are not, like those of Protestants, about matters of life and death, but about points confessedly secondary. Men cannot be expected to struggle as ardently and universally about the dispensable luxuries of life as about its indispensable necessities. In the Catholic religion God has secured the Bread of Eternal Truth to be broken in unfailing supply to the hungry multitudes, to the poor and the uneducated. He has not left them with a volume of riddles for their sole guidance, nor to the interpretation of scribes and doctors wrangling over those riddles. Abounding as they do in solid bread, in the necessities of supernatural life, the faith-taught crowds are not called to disputations beyond their ability, demanding an independence of mind whereof they are incapable. And as regards these daily necessities of spiritual enlightenment, learned and unlearned, classes and masses, are on a par. All are equally helpless as to religious truths beyond reason, while as to those within reason, the mental grasp of even the wisest is too infirm, and needs to be replaced by faith.

But in the gift of revelation, though God

helps us so far as we cannot help ourselves, He helps us no further; and in matters where failure is easily remediable where it only hurts lightly, and does not kill, He leaves us to ourselves. Outside the clearly-hedged field of revealed truth, there is an infinitely vast region of religious inquiry wherein the mind should exercise itself according to the utmost of its ability. That an educated Catholic should misuse the help of revelation as a pretext for mental sloth in regard to the supreme interests of humanity, is altogether to be deplored and reprehended; since that help is designed wholly to extend and stimulate our religious intelligence, and not to enable us to sit down idly, with a blissful sense of omniscience, as though we had nothing more to learn. Even supposing we knew our religion so thoroughly that we could not know anything more about its nature or its history, still we who are educated are bound to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us, and to make it intelligible to others who inquire of us. This means trying to enter into the minds of others who believe differently, and, so to say, studying the articles of faith in their contraries and denials—an unlimited field of labour, for the mark of truth can be missed in an infinity of ways. We are not allowed to sit on the rocks,

indifferent spectators of the struggles of those who are battling with the surf, hugging ourselves in an ecstasy of safety.

But besides this there is inexhaustible work for our mind to do. As we said before, no two of the Blessed see God in the same way or measure; and no two Catholics apprehend their faith alike; and as long as we live and think, we can go on burrowing our way further and further into the depths of meaning stored away in the dogmas of the Church. Our first progress is simply a gathering in of materials, as word by word, and line by line, the Church's official teaching is communicated to us; then commences the process of pondering and considering these parts in their relation one to another, and building them up gradually into something ever approaching yet never attaining that unity they possess in the Divine Mind, where all truths are but one truth, and all thoughts but one thought. Of course our religious intelligence can never be a philosophy, a complete and coherent system of truths neatly jointed together—to demand it should be so, is the error of rationalism. In dealing with mysteries, truths fringed with darkness, there will always be gaps and seeming contradictions in our attempted unifications; and for this very reason

the work will never be finished; there will always be more for us to do.

Again, in the reconciliation of the Catholic faith with the ever-shifting attitude of science and history; in the whole bearing of religion upon the altering conditions of secular thought and secular life, there is endless work for the religious intelligence of any educated Catholic who wishes to be in sympathy at once with his age and with his Church; and the fruit of his endeavour will be a deepened understanding and appreciation of both one and the other.

And here let us observe that to be afraid to face anything that history or science or criticism may have to say, lest it should prove at variance with our religious beliefs, far from being the mark of a firmly-rooted faith, is just the contrary. We must not only profess with our lips, but by our conduct we must prove our conviction that no contradiction can exist between natural and revealed truth; and that wherever it seems to exist it is only because we misunderstand one side or the other. And while the misunderstanding lasts, even though it last for our lifetime, true and intelligent faith will be willing to let the two irreconciled truths live quietly side by side in the mind, without forcing

a premature reconciliation, or casting out either one or the other.

Again, those who are favoured by God with the grace of a good education and a certain power of independent thought, and who are accordingly bound to add some degree of intelligence and criticism to their faith, are rightly blamed for what is largely inevitable and blameless in the multitudes who hold religious truth by faith alone. We said long since, that man-made religions are essentially corruptible and fallible in virtue of their visible part—of that outward embodiment by which they are brought home to the senses and imagination; and therefore our Lord came to give us a divine interpretation of our religious instinct and a divinely guaranteed embodiment of that interpretation. But outside this core of revelation, the religious intelligence of man works in its own natural way, both for better and for worse; and inevitably generates numerous superstitions in the minds of the uncritical; and even in more cultivated minds, not a few. It is, then, part of that loyal reverence which the educated Catholic owes to truth and to the Church's authority, to discern clearly and separate infinitely what is of divine revelation from what is of merely human

addition, be that addition true or false. "One is your Master, even Christ." We acknowledge but one supreme teaching-authority on earth, and it is treason to listen to any other with like reverence. Moses and Elias are well in their way; but they are not Christ, they are not Peter. As a feeble, half-hearted faith is timorously cautious of meeting difficulties, so too it always leans to the lazy, trouble-saving fallacy that it is better to believe too much than too little, and that credulity and superstition is an error on the right side. There is but one side when truth is in question.

Of course we should deal gently with superstition in others, especially in the uneducated, mindful lest in pulling up the tares we pull up the wheat along with it; lest in snuffing the candle we extinguish it. So St. Paul dealt with those weaker brethren, those simple souls for whom Christ died, whose false conscience forbade their eating meat offered to idols—as though idols were aught. Yet in our own minds and in the minds of those who are capable of better things, we must strive sedulously that our faith be reverently housed in a soul from which every cobweb of unworthy superstition has been carefully swept away. We are to be children in faith, but not children in folly. "Be ye children

in guile," says the Apostle, "but not children in understanding." To think accurately is the gift of the few; and the ruder a mind is, the more are its perceptions mingled with illusion. If the faithful were to refrain altogether from drawing inferences from the teachings of the Creed, and from making applications for themselves of revealed principles; if they were to be purely passive and receptive under the Church's guidance, then on the one hand there would be no superstition or delusion; but on the other there would be no intelligence added to the faith. The mind *must* perforce work upon what it believes; and this working, in the case of the rude and unlettered, *must* abound in fallacies and delusions which they can hardly detect even when pointed out to them. To throw doubt on their false deductions would often be to make them doubt the true premisses from which they erroneously drew them. *Sinite crescere*—"Let both grow till the harvest."

Does this justify the charge that the Catholic Church has one religion for the educated, another for the masses? God forbid! The faith that is common to educated and uneducated is an indefinitely higher gift than the most enlightened religious intelligence; and this faith finds on the whole purer and better dispositions

in the unspoilt minds of the simple, who know their ignorance, than in the minds of the cultured, who over-estimate their knowledge. Yet this does not alter the fact that superstition, which is the parasite of simplicity, is a blemish and an unworthy cohabitant of faith ; and that it is the duty of the intelligent and educated to weed it out of their minds studiously. Not in regard to faith, but in regard to religious intelligence, they are the *majores*, and their function in the Church is steadily and quietly to check the growth of superstition ; just as it is the function of the better classes in society to maintain standards of good taste and good judgment in a thousand matters, and so to resist the downward influence of the uncritical majority.

If from a falsely conceived intellectual humility we were all to imitate, not only the faith and simplicity, but the folly and superstition of the multitude, and were to use the education and influence God has trusted us with for their sakes, not to hinder the evil, but to further it, the wheat of Catholic truth would quickly be obliterated and lost in a tangle of tares.

Plainly, then, if ever Catholics think less and talk less on religious questions than Protestants

do, it is not for lack of matter to think and talk about; it can only be because they sometimes culpably misuse, to the hurt of their religious intelligence, that external rule of belief which God intended for its help.

This mistake manifests itself sometimes in a total apathy and listlessness of mind—as in the case of those who simply hold on to the Church as they might hold on to a book, satisfied to know that it contains the truth, without ever caring to open it, or turn over its leaves; sometimes in a certain narrow, cock-sure orthodoxy, most alien from the gentle self-diffidence of humble faith,—as in the case of those who know their catechism well by heart, and carry cut-and-dried answers to all difficulties, wrapt up in pellets to shoot out on occasion; to whom everything is clear, and common-sense, and obvious; who can define a mystery, but have never felt one. That the human words and ideas in which eternal truths are clad cannot, even through divine skill, convey to us more than a shadow of the realities they stand for; that they cannot, like numbers, be added, subtracted, and multiplied together so as to deduce new conclusions with arithmetical simplicity and accuracy, never occurs to them when they are instructing others

as ignorant; or refuting them as idiotic; or rebuking them as immoral. For such persons religion has the same kind of interest as the multiplication-table, and no more. There is nothing mysterious, or beautiful, or awful about it; nothing to feed the mind or to subdue it with inexhaustible wonder.

Lastly, as in matters of faith and right belief, so in those pertaining to morals and right conduct, the infallible guidance which the Church offers us should not paralyze, but invigorate our practical judgment. Besides the decalogue, she gives us a fairly large number of moral precepts which, being of universal applicability, may serve as principles for our guidance in concrete cases. But the application of these principles to varieties of time, place, condition, individual character, and the like, is left to our own mind. Here, if there is any danger of abuse, it might be in the case of those who look on their spiritual director as a substitute for their own conscience; and not as one whose whole task is to help them to develop their conscience—to teach them so to judge for themselves that gradually they shall become nearly independent of such assistance; to guide them to the best of all guides—God's Holy Spirit. This, however, is an abuse to which not only

spiritual advice and direction, but all advice is liable. Indolent minds will never think for themselves as long as there is somebody to ask; and there are always plenty of oracular "somebodies" whose readiness to give advice is in direct proportion to the narrowness of their experience and the rashness of their judgment.

Therefore, as with the sacraments and the means of grace, so it is with the means of light which the Church affords us. They are designed to increase and not to check our spiritual activity; to develop, not to extinguish our personality. God looks, and has a right to look to us Catholics for immeasurably more than He expects from others. What more could He have done for His vine that He has not done? Will He then be content if it bring forth wild grapes for sweet? Shall not much be required from us to whom so much has been given?

LECTURE VII.

ABUSE OF THE PROMISE OF INDEFECTIBILITY.

In the two preceding conferences we considered the religion of the Incarnation, that is, the Catholic Church, as an external instrument for the internal sanctification of her own members —as quickening and stimulating the mind to supernatural activity by an outward rule of truth; and the will, by outward means of grace.

But she has other sheep which are not of this fold, and them she must also bring, that there may be one fold and one shepherd. She is, as we have already said, a militant body, and her warfare is both defensive and offensive—defensive, in so far as she protects her own children and gathers her brood under her wing, and all timid though she be by nature, waxes fierce against the birds of prey that would molest them; offensive, in so far as she desires all men outside the fold to be saved and to come, not merely to that sufficient knowledge of saving truth which is denied to none, but to that

fulness of knowledge, that exuberant richness of salvation which is found only within her pale. Conquest is her end, no less than self-defence; yet it is conquest for the good of the conquered, not for their hurt. When an earthly state is at war, the energies of her citizens are drained and diverted from the work of peaceful self-expansion to the work of aggression or self-defence. No doubt this temporary suspension of civic progress and prosperity is directed to its eventual acceleration and increase; for peace is the motive of war. Still the arts of peace and the arts of war are totally distinct, whereas in the *Civitas Dei* they are identical. We are not called on to lay aside, even for a time, the work of our individual salvation in order to labour for the salvation of others; but it is precisely by being on fire ourselves that we are to set fire to the world all round us.

Some would almost seem to think that as we distinguish the *Ecclesia docens* from the *Ecclesia discens*, the Church teaching from the Church taught; so we should distinguish the Church active and militant, from the Church passive and quiescent; the former body being identical with the clergy and the latter with the laity—the clergy labouring and rowing; the laity simply paying their fare and sitting idly as so much

ballast in the bark of Peter. Plainly this is a most false and pernicious analogy. It is not only to the clergy but also to the laity—to the whole Church, both collectively and distributively, that our Saviour says: You are the light of the world; you are the salt of the earth; let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

We must not therefore imagine that the Church has done all her work in our regard when she has developed our spiritual faculties to the full. As soon as the work of personal development is complete the period of reproductive fertility sets in. The vine puts forth the grape, but the grape in its maturity carries a seed in its bosom. The Church's work in our soul is complete only when that soul becomes a centre of new life, communicating the flame to others. We are not solitary, but social beings; as we depend upon others and receive from them nine-tenths of what we are, so they depend upon us and look to us for some little fractional return. This sense of our indebtedness to society, to the Church, to the world at large; and of our obligation to live wholly for others—whether directly or indirectly—and for ourselves only in order to live more effectually for others;

is, so to say, the last grace with which our humanity is crowned ; it is like a latent faculty, which makes its appearance only when the work of spiritual development is otherwise complete.

When this country is at war we do not all feel the effects of it. We perhaps pay extra taxes, or others pay taxes for us ; but the fighting is done by deputy. But universal conscription is the Church's law ; all must fight ; there is no buying out. Her warfare is not carried on solely by the Pope or the Bishops or the clergy ; the layman is not a mere civilian in the *Civitas Dei ;* for the Church is altogether and perpetually a militant state ; and her victory requires and is measured by the exertion of each single one of her members, from the greatest to the least.

But, it will be said, her victory is secured ; it is fated by an everlasting decree : "On this rock, eternal, immutable, will I found My Church. The powers of Hell shall not prevail against it. Lo ! I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

Here, again, we have to deal with the same kind of misapprehension which occupied us in our two previous Conferences. Helps, natural or supernatural, are promised and given to us by God, not to exempt us from any labour we

are capable of—from any exertion we should otherwise have made, but to make us capable of greater exertion and to stimulate and encourage us so to use up that increased capacity that we shall merit to receive yet greater increase

If, then, God has promised by some special providence to save the Church from the ordinary and universal law of social growth and decay, it is not that Catholics should, on that account, exert themselves less for the spread and triumph of religion than they would do if its prevalence depended upon them alone. Contrariwise, it is in order that, fighting as they do against such fearful odds, they may have confidence and courage to go on fighting in many a crisis where reason and common-sense, and anything less than faith in a divine promise, would bid them give up and surrender to the inevitable. That promise is therefore designed to make them fight, not less, but more. It does not tell them that the victory is to be secured without fighting, but through fighting. It does not suspend the natural laws of cause and effect; or bid them look for the end without using the means; but spurs them on to be more active in studying the causes and applying the means of victory. History shows us over and over again, how men will fight to the death against the most fearful

odds when, falsely or truly, they believe that victory is divinely assured to them, provided only they believe that it is through fighting it is to be effected. Of course if they think their deliverance is to be wrought through the intervention of miracles, then indeed their confidence will enervate rather than stimulate their activity. So it is with ourselves. We never attempt what we believe to be impossible ; and the commonest cause of failure is the false conviction that fail we must. To banish this illusion, to convince a man that he can succeed, that he will succeed, is often the only way to rouse him from hopeless lethargy. Thus it is that the Church is animated, time after time, to renew what else would seem a fruitless struggle with the world ; nor does she ever forget that her promised perpetuity is the result, not of a miracle or series of miracles, but of Divine assistance and special providence, using the workings of natural laws

According to these laws the history of other "religious revivals" and movements may be compared to the effect produced by a stone falling into a smooth pond. From the centre of disturbance the wavelets circle out wider and wider, and weaker and weaker, till the original force is altogether spent, as far as perceptible

movement is concerned. The founder of a religious movement embodies in himself the fulness of its spirit, which he communicates with some slight diminution to his immediate disciples and followers; these again transmit it to others. And as time goes on and as numbers are multiplied, and the average of capability thereby lowered, that original spirit is less completely communicated, and gradually dies away and is forgotten. It may perhaps be studied and analyzed and dissected and talked about; but it is not felt.

Following this law, the impulse given by Christ to the human soul should naturally have produced, as it did, its fullest fruit in Mary and the Apostles and the early Christians and martyrs, and then have died away quietly long since. But as a matter of fact God has so far maintained the Church in existence by a series of providential revivals, by ever reinforcing the weakening energy as often as, at periods of decadence it seemed all but exhausted. He has raised up a saint or a reformer or the founder of an Order just at the right moment, when all seemed lost, and the ship was just heeling over. Nor can we regard this exactly as a *Deus ex machina* expedient, as something strictly miraculous; for that saints should arise

from time to time is no more wonderful in the world of grace, than the occasional appearance of a poet or a genius in the world of nature. It only means that the arms of God's providence are round His Church, that He disposes all things sweetly in her behalf, working, according to His invariable economy, by natural means as far as may be. Looking into the history of the Church, there is perhaps little or nothing which the philosopher of history could not explain by the ordinary laws which govern the conduct of men, save only this providential supply and succession of enthusiasts who lash the Church into vigour again and again when her force seems well-nigh spent.

From all this it is clear that the promise of perpetuity or indefectibility made to the Church should not relax our efforts, but should multiply them. It is through the energy of her children that she is to prevail; and furthermore, the degree of her triumph—whether she is merely to escape extinction and drag her way through the world feeble and dishonoured, or to live a full and glorious existence, the Mistress of many nations; all this depends, on each particular day and in each particular place, entirely upon us, upon each one of us. All God has promised is, that however unfaithful and

indolent we may be, yet for the sake of the world at large and for the sake of Christ and His saints, He will always preserve His Church in conspicuous evidence.

It is sometimes very hard to resist the impression that members of other religious denominations who have no divine guarantee for the perpetuity of their sect, who believe, therefore, that all depends on their united efforts, are often more zealous, more united, more public-spirited, generous, self-sacrificing, than many Catholics who, under cover of confidence in the Divine promise, justify a certain apathy and indifference in the Church's cause, which is really the fruit of a secret fatalism. These latter say: "God will bring all things right in the end;" but they forget that we must help Him to bring them right; that "how far right" depends wholly on us; that if "less right" through our supine fatalism, it will be anything but right for us.

Thus, as we saw before in regard to the Church's sacraments and her teaching, so here we see that what God intends to be a help and a stimulus may be misused and perverted into a hindrance; what was designed to encourage effort in the day of storm and battle may be used to discourage effort in the day of peace

and tranquillity ; nay, sometimes it is only when the Church is so hard pressed that men's faith in the divine promise weakens, that they rouse themselves to action and begin to do what they could and should have done long before.

But apart from this unfortunate fatalism, which may infect all alike—clergy as well as laity, the energies of the latter are often paralyzed by the misapprehension, already alluded, to which regards the relation between clergy and laity as analogous to that between soldier and civilian in the secular state, and therefore considers the layman as exempt from all duty of forwarding the Church's cause upon earth, and limits his obligation to that of passively submitting his own soul to be operated upon by the sacraments and teaching of the Church.

Now undoubtedly the Church's warfare involves an immense diversity of functions and ministrations, and some of these, such as the official ministry of the word and the sacraments is the proper province of the clergy. But religion, and the Catholic religion especially, penetrates into all departments of human life—departments from the greater number of which the clergy are often excluded by the very nature of their profession. Wherever there is an alternative of right or wrong, of false or true, of fair or

foul, there the interest of the Church needs to be looked after. In the world of thought, whether we consider history or philosophy or science, there is always a false and a true, and the cause of truth is the cause of Christ and His Church. In the world of action, if we turn to art and literature, there is the fair and the foul, the ennobling and the debasing, a potent influence on the human spirit for good or for evil; and it is not hard to see on which side Christ's interests lie. If we turn to the domain of practical utility, is there any corner wholly exempt from the jurisdiction of religion and morality, whether we look to politics, domestic and foreign; or to the profession and pursuits of the educated; or to commerce and business; or to public enterprises affecting the temporal and spiritual welfare of millions? With all these matters the cause of the Church and of Christianity is intimately bound up, and the Catholic layman has a side to take and a part to play. Nay, it is principally in these matters that Christianity extends its influence and roots itself in human society. The priests, with their preaching and sacraments, do nothing in the Church's external warfare, except so far as they incite and stimulate laymen to use their influence, each in his own department, for the cause

of Christ—for what is just and right and fair and good. They preach the Crusade, they harangue the crusaders, but the actual pushing of the Church's interests is nearly altogether in the hands of the laity. Look into the past, and you will see how largely it has been so. And if you think you see the priest too often in politics, perhaps it is because the layman is not seen there often enough.

One probable cause of periods of apathy and inertness among the laity is the different exigencies of times of danger and times of safety. In crises of special peril, where much depends on unity and promptitude both of judgment and action, all initiative is wisely gathered up to the head and centre of the Church's social organism, and that blind, passive obedience is required of the members which is required of soldiers in the hour of battle, when, if each were left to judge as he chose, and to act as he judged, chaos and defeat would be the result. But what is good in a crisis and in time of danger is not good at other times. Blind obedience is the best on certain occasions, but it is not the best in itself; it is not the better for being blind. In itself and where practicable, an intelligent and sympathetic obedience is better, such as was the obedience of Christ to His Father's will.

Ignatius Loyola,[1] whose doctrine is ignorantly supposed to be extreme and exceptional in this matter, says rightly that when the judgment is not in sympathy with what is commanded, the obedience is very imperfect (*valde imperfecta*) and cannot be relied upon. Furthermore, such obedience is not educative, as it does not teach the subject to guide himself independently when the guidance of authority cannot be had; since he does not see the principles and reasons of the command given. Yet when for one reason or another he is not capable of seeing the reasons, and prompt action is required, this blind obedience is relatively the most reasonable.

But in times of comparative peace and tranquillity all this centralization is relaxed and the power of initiative flows out to the extremities

[1] St. Ignatius uses "blind" in an unusual sense. Commonly obedience is called "blind" when, as in a secret society, one acts without knowing why or wherefore, as an automaton. This is military obedience; and is not educative in any sense; *i.e.*, it does not make the subject capable of independent judgment when guidance is withdrawn. But St. Ignatius calls obedience blind in so far as in accordance with the principles of sound reason and fairmindedness we strive to bring our judgment into agreement with that of a superior so as to *see as he sees*—not indeed doing violence to truth, but doing violence to the narrowing bias of egoism and self-will. As dying to one's selfishness is the secret of living; so being blinded to one's prejudices is the secret of seeing.

once more, just as the sap of a tree rises in spring-time and gives vitality to the branches and twigs that have been sleeping through the winter. Then authority is largely relieved of its burden; and its care is rather to encourage, to guide, and at times perhaps to check the too exuberant activity which everywhere buds and blossoms and fruits and covers the gaunt skeleton with a living garment of verdure. In the day of battle and in the crisis where collective action is necessary, there is but one judgment and one will—that of the commander; every other will or judgment so far as it is original or different from his is simply in the way. But in the day of calm every opinion is listened to, every hindrance to spontaneity and initiation is removed; all the collective intelligence and spiritual energy of the community which before was pent up and useless, is now let loose and turned to account; and authority emulates the wisdom of a good rider in making the curb felt as little as possible.

But to pass from the conditions and methods of a state of danger to those of a state of safety cannot be done in a day; and on the part of both rulers and subjects the old habits cling closely and are slowly put aside; and so in these days we find the Catholic laity in many places sadly

wanting in spontaneous interest and initiative in Church matters, and if not indifferent yet passive, and disposed to look to the clergy for everything, or at least for all suggestion and direction. And on the other hand, we may find clergy who have been brought up under the shadow of persecution and oppression, unaware that a new day has dawned, or rubbing dazed eyes, and still mistrustful of any symptom of initiative in the laity as though it foreboded mutiny in the ranks. And thus there is lost to the Church's cause a great store of spiritual energy and intelligence distributed among her members, which is truer and more real wealth than money or political influence or than establishment and endowment.

Of this state of things a novelist already quoted writes: "If then this Church is the bulwark of modern society, can there be a more ignoble destiny than to sit still and let her, unaided and single-handed, confront the vast and terrific forces that are arrayed against her? On the other hand, can there be a more sublime destiny, or a more noble undertaking than to stand by her side and throw in such little forces as are placed at our disposal in her support and for the confusion of her enemies? Yet hitherto the entire struggle has been tacitly

left by laymen in the hands of the captains of the King's hosts. Against all the natural and supernatual agencies at work in the world, opposed to God and His Christ—heresy and infidelity, with their tremendous intellectual forces, irreligious governments, with all State appliances, treasuries, armies, navies, at their disposal; the press, with its far-reaching power; literature that derives its supreme attraction from its un-Christian or immoral teachings; art, that is the workshop of Satan; politics that would exile the Church from the world; the drink syndicates that are becoming omnipotent through human impotency; the social evil that has forced itself to be State recognized; schools from which God is banished; family circles where religion is never mentioned; society that would take offence at God's name,—in a word, against all the professed badness of the world, and against all the unconfessed indifference marshalled in hostile array . . . stand timidly on the side of Christ, a handful of priests, a few weak women, a literature that is saved from ridicule barely by its good intentions, and a few saints who lift up their hands . . . from the mountain whilst the armies of Israel are hard pressed in the valleys of humiliation and defeat. All this time what are Catholic laymen

doing? Absolutely nothing; either defensive or aggressive. With the exception of a few Vincent de Paul Societies, there is absolutely no organization that would combine into one solid body all the zeal and talent of thousands of young men who would dare and do a great deal for Jesus Christ, but who are now kept back from want of an inspiring voice that would tell them: Go, and throw in all your resources of mind and body to destroy the empire of Belial and to extend the empire of Christ."

But besides whatever we can do for the furtherance of Christian principles and measures in the society around us; we have also, each of us, a mission to individuals. Not a preaching nor a controversial mission—Heaven forbid! but a mission of practical influence. Let your light so shine before men, not that they may hear your good arguments, but that they may see your good works; and this again, not that they may glorify you, but that they may glorify your Father in Heaven, that is, your religion; that they may say: This is what Catholicism effects in those who make use of its teaching and its sacraments.

Our Saviour strictly forbids us to put the truth before those who do not already *want* to

believe it: "Cast not your pearls before swine." For the sake of those whose affection is already drawn to the Church in some other way, and who want to believe but cannot, owing to some ignorance or obscurity; and for the sake of Catholics who love their religion and yet have difficulties of the mind, controversy may have its lawful sphere. But wrangling with those who hate our doctrines and who simply want to justify themselves or to confound us is altogether unjustified. The true method is to get men to *wish* to believe; that is, to make them know and love the idea of the Church and wish it to be true. Given this disposition, God will see to the rest; without it, all other labour is vain.

And to effect this, our first endeavour must be to make men better morally, that is, to make them more conscientious, more strictly obedient to what they believe, truly or falsely, to be right; not at first troubling to rectify their judgment, to disturb or change their beliefs, but by all means getting them into that state of perfect sincerity and good faith which is at once the essential condition and the infallible cause of spiritual enlightenment. Let us take men as we find them, Jews, Turks, infidels, heretics, and discerning the elements

of truth and goodness which are already in them by the grace of God, foster and encourage them and leave the rest alone, trusting that as these grow they will naturally extrude all that is alien.

And the next great thing is, as Joubert says, to make the truth lovely, not to send her forth in full armour bristling with darts and javelins, to challenge defiance and rouse opposition; but rather to imitate the Incarnate Truth, Who made Himself lowly and fair and attractive, coming among us unarmed and unresisting; a meek and humble-hearted Teacher unlike the pedantic Scribe and the subtle-minded Pharisee; one Who bade Peter sheathe his violent sword, Who touched and healed the rude wound his fiery zeal had inflicted. *In hoc signo vinces.* It was by the method of the Cross, by the method of meekness, that Christianity conquered the world; and whenever her well-meaning defenders have invoked fire from Heaven, whenever they have taken the sword, whether the sword of steel or the envenomed sword of the tongue, whether trusting to physical violence and political craft, or to keenness of mind in dialectical fencing; or to sharpness of retort in acrimonious controversy—in all cases alike the sword has turned

back upon them, and by the sword they have perished.

"Put thy sword into its scabbard," says our Lord. Were His Kingdom of this world, His servants would fight, with twelve legions of angels at their back.

LECTURE VIII.

INTERIOR FAITH.

We said at the very beginning of our conferences, that man's human perfection lay in a self-induced subjection of the flesh to the spirit —of the senses, the imagination, the passions, the feelings, to reason, intelligence, and will; in guiding his life not by transitory appearances, but by eternal realities; not by that which seems to be, but by that which is. All admit this, at least implicitly. A man who lacks prudence or foresight, or whose judgments are all *prima facie* or superficial, is so far regarded as a child or a savage, that is, as an undeveloped man, because he has not yet learnt to guide his actions by what is future and therefore invisible, or by what underlies the outward semblance of things present.

So far as the word *faith* might be used to signify a practical hold on unapparent truths, on unseen realities, a power of resisting the illusions of the senses and the imagination, faith

might be said to be a condition of all human, as opposed to merely animal, life; a condition of success even in business and in the subordinate affairs of our daily existence wholly unconnected with religion.

But when we come to the supreme and eternal interests to which all these temporal concerns are or ought to be subordinate, where, as in the case of what is called natural religion, the realities by which our conduct is to be guided, lie at the extreme horizon of our intelligence; or, as in the case of supernatural religion, altogether beyond it; then faith, in the above sense of realizing the unseen, is at once far more difficult and far more imperatively necessary. Without faith it is impossible to please God, *i.e.*, impossible to lead a moral and religious life. For the things of religion are after all the great concern of life; and what will it profit us to have been wise and prudent in the choice and use of the means, if we are ignorant or mistaken in regard to the end; what avails the swiftest running, if what we are pursuing is the rainbow?

And yet because the truths of even natural religion are ultimate truths—the deepest down, the furthest off of all, we can never get all round them or grasp them comfortably, but at most can touch them with the tip of our finger. They

are the solid earth on what we build the fabric of our life and thought, and which we presuppose as the basis of all our labours, but which we cannot measure and hew and cart about as we do the stones we pile upon it. For we have necessarily to think and speak of eternal and spiritual realities in the terms of those temporal and bodily things which fall under our experience. We are as one born blind, who must think of the visible world of colour and form in terms of sound and touch and the other senses. He gets to know it very imperfectly by symbol and metaphor, but not in its own terms; and yet he is affected by that colour-world in many ways, and must guide his actions by such knowledge of it as he can gain from others.

Still more helpless are we in regard to strictly supernatural religious truths which God Himself has tried in some little measure to explain to us in the language of things we know; using such homely and popular notions as Father, Son, Spirit, nature, unity, substance, and the like, which convey to us just so much of the corresponding reality as we are at present capable of apprehending. We must not suppose that God willingly hides from us any part of these truths just in order to try us by making faith difficult; that He is as one who puts a truism in the form

of a riddle in order to make it as obscure as possible. Far from this, God wants all men to come to a knowledge of all truth so far as they are capable of it ; and dogmas are difficult, not because He wants to puzzle us, but because, we being as yet so imperfect, even He cannot make the truth any plainer to us at present—"I have yet many things to tell you of, but you cannot bear them now."

If, however, it is very necessary for us to guide our lives by these ultimate truths—so unreal, so far off, in relation to our almost animal mind—it is also very difficult. Our whole propensity when we let go and suffer ourselves to drift passively, is to live by the visible, not by the invisible ; to be animal in our mind as well as in our morals. The whole labour of our spiritual and reasonable life is to resist this downward pull, and to raise ourselves slowly from a state of animal-mindedness to a state of human-mindedness ; and therefore, Divine Faith, so far as it is the realizing of things hoped for in the future, the evidence of things at present not apparent, far from doing violence to our rational soul, is but an extension of its natural perfection. It is but a carrying onwards and upwards of what might be called the fundamental natural virtue, which distinguishes

the man from the mere savage, or the child, or the animal. For the supernatural does not either here or elsewhere extrude nature, nor is it abruptly superimposed thereon, but mingles with it and transforms it as light streaming through a stained window.

When we said that the Word was made flesh in order that He might heal the invisible part of our nature through the visible part which had occasioned its hurt; we were saying in another way that He came to strengthen our faith; to tighten our grasp on those eternal and invisible realities in accordance with which our life as a whole must be governed; and that He came to effect this through the instrumentality of a visible Church, teaching through human words and notions, and sanctifying through human rites and symbols.

Even in the ordinary affairs of life we know how in moments of passion, or fear, or intense desire, our judgment is blinded and unbalanced; how our attention is all focussed upon that one side of a question which appeals to our present feelings and emotions, and is withdrawn from every other consideration; how what seemed prudent and right to us in our calm hours, now seems so no longer. And if we know ourselves by past experience of the like kind, we try to

resist this illusion of the feelings; and how do we do so? Not by trying to see the truth when we are incapable of seeing it—when our dimmed eyes are smarting with dust and fog—but by holding on blindly with our *will* to what we judged right in the hour of calm, when we were capable of seeing. We appeal from our mad and distracted self to our sane and sober self. Or what often serves us just as well in the same or similar crises, we hold on blindly by our will, not to our own past judgment, but to the present judgment of some one else whom we know and love and trust; and who is not biassed and disturbed like ourselves.

Now all this is essentially faith; it is holding on by sheer force of will to truths that at the moment we cannot see or verify for ourselves.

But, as we have said, religious truths are at once the most practically important of all, and the most difficult of all; and in respect to them our whole life is a temptation and a season of blindness; and therefore we need to reach out our will and hold on tight to God's word and judgment, and so steady ourselves in the turbid, rushing stream of life's illusions and appearances, which else would carry us away to destruction. And since to do so is as necessary a condition of our spiritual life, as eating is of our

bodily life, it is a plain duty and a command of God; not merely a matter of counsel or advice. Just as it would be wicked to let ourselves seriously doubt about the wrongness of lying or murder or impurity or suicide, because perhaps there seemed to us some unanswered difficulties of a philosophical nature on the other side; so it would be wicked for us, in the matter of faith, to let loose the grip of our will on the word of God, for the sake of any difficulty that might offer itself to our present limited view. For this would be to prefer our worse to our better judgment.

Hence, we get a clearer idea of what faith is. It is holding on blindly by our will to God's word, because He tells us to hold on to it. He says to our conscience: "This is My word, and My word is the truth itself. Hold to it with your will, as firmly as you would do if you saw it with your mind." And as a little child obeys its mother and believes what she tells it, and as firmly as she tells it, not because it has first criticized her ability or her truthfulness, but because it recognizes instinctively her right to command in the matter; so those who recognize the authority of God's voice, whether in conscience, or in Christ, or in the Catholic Church, obey because they are told. "My sheep," He says, "hear My voice." They do not prove it,

but they recognize it by a sort of instinct; just as on the other hand, they will run from a wolf, though they have never seen one before. Thus, by nature, we recognize that conscience is to be obeyed even to death; and those who are true to conscience, recognize exactly the same voice in Christ and in the Church. Can you explain to another how you recognize some one by his tread, or his voice, or his expression? No, and yet you do not doubt it. And so though we may not be able to explain why the voice of conscience and of Christ and of the Church is to our ears all one, yet we who have once felt can never doubt it.

We said indeed that an educated Catholic has some kind of obligation proportioned to his intellectual standing, of being able to give reasons for his faith, by showing how current philosophy and history and science all point to the truth of Christianity, and how nothing we are really bound to believe can be shown to be contrary to any finally established scientific or historic truth. But since history and science are always changing and fluctuating, and since even the Church's understanding and expression of the faith changes as it grows deeper and more discerning, it is plain that all such reconciliations of faith with secular knowledge are

only provisional and tentative; never final or exhaustive; and so it would be a disastrous thing were we to rest our own personal faith on any frail logical fabric of the kind. It would mean that with every new discovery of science or history, every new difficulty suggested to us by reason, every new fashion of philosophy, the whole structure would be shaken, perhaps to its foundations, and our faith would, so to say, have to be suspended till we could build it up again, and work the new data into harmonious agreement with the old. It is vitally important to realize that our faith does not and should not rest on the defence we can make of our faith—on any thread of syllogisms or arguments however skilfully spun.

The latter is an intellectual luxury for the few; and has certain uses for a limited nature; but it is a necessity for none. Faith is produced not by the power of arguments over the mind; but by the power and authority of God's will felt and obeyed by the human will—very much as a dog feels and obeys the will of his master made known in a look or a word.

If faith had to be produced by force of arguments, or if it needed them as its necessary condition, what would become of the unlettered crowds whose faith nevertheless is held up as

the type to which ours must be conformed, if we are to enter the kingdom with them? What sort of reasoned defence of their faith could Peter or Andrew or the sons of Zebedee have made to the Scribes and Doctors, when at a look or a word they rose up and followed Christ, as sheep follow their shepherd?

It is evident then that our personal faith in God depends on a certain internal power of hearing which can be dulled and lost by persistently stopping our ears to the voice of conscience, and resisting the influence of its authoritative tone. "My sheep hear My voice;" that is, those who habitually listen to God's voice within, will recognize it when it speaks to them from without. If a conscientious pagan resists Christianity, or a conscientious Christian resists Catholicity, it is only because the truth has not yet been duly set before him; God's voice has not been allowed to sound alone in his ears, but has been confused with the bruit and din of mere human opinions.

Plainly, then, difficulties of the mind, difficulties from history or science or philosophy, however they make us doubt about our logical defence of the faith, even should they break it down altogether, as may happen at times, cannot touch our faith itself in any way; just as

no failure in the popular proofs of our own identity would shake our belief in it or change our practical conduct in the least detail.

But notwithstanding this, our faith can be indefinitely strengthened, or it can be gradually weakened and lost altogether, according as we draw nearer to God and get to know the tone of His voice more intimately; or as we wander away from Him till we are altogether out of hearing; for in point of fact it is by *doing*, and not by *thinking* or reasoning that we apprehend God and His truth in this life. In the next life He will present Himself directly to the soul's eye, as something to be gazed upon, as the subsistent Light and Truth; but here He offers Himself principally to us as something to be done, as an Eternal Will, or Eternal Justice, Eternal Holiness—not to be looked at or talked about, but to be produced in our own soul, and brought into it,—to be conceived and born and matured there. God is not directly reached by our *mind*, or our *imagination*, but only an idea or picture of God which we ourselves have constructed out of the fragments of our experience—a crude, childish representation at the best. It is not God, but only this rude image of God we set before our mind's eye when we pray to Him or think of Him, and try to

love Him and find it so hard to succeed. No wonder, then, that He seems so far away, so uncertain, so intangible.

But it is not thus in their minds and in their ideas and in their imaginings that the poor and the simple seek God, and find and love Him, or that we are to be content to seek Him. His Eternal Will is really working in us and mingles its activity with ours, just as the weight of our bodies, which is no absolute quality of their own, but simply the perennial influence of the earth's attraction upon them, mingles with and rules all their other proper activities. Take the earth from under our feet by annihilation, and all our sense of weight and downward tendency would vanish with it; take away God, and all our sense of upward tendency, all our drawing towards what is good and better would disappear just as effectually. Conscience would be instantly extinguished. God, who created our soul in His likeness, and made it capable of indefinitely closer assimilation to its archetype, is ever drawing that soul towards Himself, towards every kind of goodness and betterness, and this will or attraction, which we call "conscience," is ever mingling with and trying to dominate our narrow, selfish will, and make it one with His. While a body is impeded in its fall to earth, the

earth really, though imperceptibly, acts on it; but that action is not manifest till the body is set free; and the longer it falls, and so yields to the earth's draw, the more violently and rapidly is it drawn. So with God; the more we yield ourselves to that Eternal Will in us which draws us towards Him, so much the more is His action manifested and exercised in us, and the divine life and being more largely mingled with and made visible in our own life and being. Every good action we do is a joint product; it is the child of God's will and our own co-operating will; and as married love is cemented more firmly than ever when it is fruitful in offspring, so by every good action, interior or exterior, there is a new bond of union between God and ourselves, and He permeates our soul more fully, as light permeates water that gradually grows clearer and purer.

And thus we get a sort of experimental knowledge of God which can never be got from the most elaborate philosophical or theological notions of His nature, nor even from the most realistic meditations on His self-revelation in Christ, which, after all, can only appeal to those who have first known Him experimentally. *Gustate et videte*—"*Taste* and see how sweet He is," says the Psalm; that is to say: Do not

reason about God, but go and let Him mingle His life with your life, His will with your will, and see what sweetness and strength He will bring into your existence; for "His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace."

A man who by some chance had never seen salt and had formed no idea of what it is like in its crystallized state, might all the same know it very practically as that which made sea-water taste so differently from fresh; and similarly millions whose mental pictures and ideas of God are absurd enough, who have the vaguest and most erroneous notion of what He is in Himself, considered separately as a substance apart, may know Him very really and immediately as the Will whose predominance within them makes the difference between the sweetness of a good life and the bitterness of a bad one.

This is the way in which our religion, by being lived and put in practice, becomes a solid, tangible reality, instead of a mere bundle of ideas and arguments—it becomes a matter of experience, something to be done, and realized in the doing, instead of a matter of theory, to be discussed and speculated about. It is not difficult for a blind man to believe in the sun, which he has never seen, when he is saturated with its heat; and it is not hard for us to

believe in the unseen realities faith tells us of when our whole life is permeated and transformed by their influence.

And thus it is wisely said, that action is the great cure for doubt; not in the sense that fuss and preoccupation distract our attention from criticism and inquiry, and make us content to take things for granted; but because by acting our faith, by yielding to God's urgency in our conscience, we become better and purer in ourselves, and our spiritual vision is cleared;—for obscurity is not in the truth, but in us. If a man's mind and energy were paralyzed, as sometimes happens, by scepticism as to his own identity or as to the existence of what we call an "external world," we should say to him: "Leave your study and your books and go out into God's fresh air; live in the world, handle it, use it, deal with it, and it will become a reality to you again. You have been using one faculty of your soul too exclusively, and neglecting the others, on which its right exercise depends directly or indirectly; you are therefore in a morbid, unbalanced state. Why trust your philosophic reason so much, and yet distrust those primitive and instinctive apprehensions whose validity you inevitably, though unconsciously, presuppose and assume in all your

reasonings. What does it matter to you that your metaphysics cannot justify your instinctive belief in your own identity, or in the reality of all around you, if at the same time it tells you that the practical effects and impressions will always be the same, and that your conduct must be guided in all respects as before. Neither human society nor God will acquit you for living like a madman because, forsooth, your philosophy did not square with your common sense. If in attempting to fly you have broken your neck, you cannot blame God, who never made you for flying."

Thus we should argue with such a one, and rightly; for after all God gave us our minds, not for metaphysics, but for the great practical needs of life; just as He gave us our feet, not for dancing on tight ropes, but for walking on the flat earth. Have we a right to complain that we cannot get a clear, metaphysical view of God and our religion, if we have abundant light to know Him as one whom we must obey, even unto death, and if by obeying Him we come to an ever deeper sense of His presence and His will and His divine character.

And what is true about belief in God, is true of the whole Catholic creed, which but develops the notion of God as He has supernaturally

revealed Himself to us in the religion of the Incarnation. Our faith is never in danger so long as it permeates and seasons our life; it is always in danger when it is a mere assent of the mind and a profession of the lips. Intellectual difficulties are like microbes in the air, fatal to the sickly, but powerless against a healthy constitution. If the heart be sound, difficulties may enter the mind and lie there unsolved for years or for ever, without raising a single real doubt, or even disquieting the imagination; for the faith that has been felt and has proved itself in action, has nothing to fear from speculation.

And all this drives home the theme we have been mainly occupied with in our Conferences, namely, the danger of mere externality and formalism in our religion, of being content with passive orthodoxy and with frequenting the sacraments and with conformity to the Church's laws—as though these outward things were ends in themselves, and not merely instruments to develop the latent Christ that is in each of us; to develop the light of Christ in our minds and the holiness of Christ in our wills and affections and the zeal of Christ in our activity—in a word, to develop the life of faith and make it dominant over the life of sense. It was from this life of faith that our first parents fell,

yielding to the illusions of outward impressions and appearances; it is to this life of faith that Christ restores us, using these same outward impressions and appearances to convey to us those truths which by nature they hide from us; curing our inward life by means of the outward, the spirit by means of the flesh, which had occasioned its ruin.

Yet it is not enough to believe in this cure, to swear by it, to recommend it to others, unless we use it on ourselves. It is by living our faith that it strikes root deep in our heart; else in time of temptation it will wither away.

And thus we complete, more or less roughly, the exposition of that one thought which has occupied us throughout. Having agreed to view the Incarnation as God's design to restore faith through sense, the invisible through the visible, the spirit through the flesh, turning the poison into an antidote; we saw how this design was extended in Catholicity, which, with its outward and inward aspect, is the religion of the Incarnation, of the Word made Flesh. And seeing how this Divine conception might be misapprehended in two ways, we first spoke of the error of those who, despising the external part of Christianity, think the internal all-sufficient. And as our purpose was domestic

improvement, and not polemical aggression, we passed lightly over that well-trodden ground, and turned to the contrary error of those who are too satisfied with external Christianity ; who forget that outward dogmas, rites, and practices are but means to interior life, which is the principal end. Then, in detail, we saw how this mistake might show itself in the misuse of those outward helps, which are designed not to save us any labour we are capable of, but to get more labour out of us ; and first of all in regard to sacraments and outer means of grace ; then as to dogmatic teaching and outward means of light. Then we saw how that help by which God secures indefectibility to the visible Church might in like manner be misused as an excuse for listless apathy. Finally, we have insisted directly on the all-importance of that inner life of faith to which all this outward religion is but instrumental, and which is established in us, not by any working of our mind, in the way of arguing or reasoning, or criticizing ; but by the working of our will, where God's action mingles with ours, and where we get to know Him intimately and experimentally, and to talk with Him as a friend with a friend.

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